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THE POEMS OF  
DIGBY MACKWORTH DOLBEN  
WITH A MEMOIR

OXFORD: HORACE HART  
PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY





DIGBY MACKWORTH DOLBEN

*From a photograph by Messrs. Hills & Saunders*



THE POEMS OF  
DIGBY MACKWORTH DOLBEN

EDITED  
WITH A MEMOIR  
BY  
ROBERT BRIDGES



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## MEMOIR

I HAD not visited Eton for many years, when one day passing from the Fellows' Library into the Gallery I caught sight of the portrait of my school-friend Digby Dolben hanging just without the door among our most distinguished contemporaries. I was wholly arrested, and as I stood gazing on it, my companion asked me if I knew who it was. I was thinking that, beyond a few whom I could name, I must be almost the only person who would know. Far memories of my boyhood were crowding freshly upon me : he was standing again beside me in the eager promise of his youth ; I could hear his voice ; nothing of him was changed ; while I, wrapt from him in a confused mist of time, was wondering what he would think, could he know that at this actual moment he would have been dead thirty years, and that his memory would be thus preserved and honoured in the beloved school, where his delicate spirit had been so strangely troubled.

This portrait-gallery of old Etonians is very select : preëminent distinction of birth or merit may win you a place there, or again official connection with the

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school, which rightly loves to keep up an unbroken panorama of its teachers, and to vivify its annals with the faces and figures of the personalities who carried on its traditions. But how came Dolben there ? It was because he was a poet,—that I knew ;—and yet his poems were not known ; they were jealously guarded by his family and a few friends : indeed such of his poems as could have come to the eyes of the authorities who sanctioned this memorial would not justify it. There was another reason ; and the portrait bears its own credentials ; for though you might not perhaps divine the poet in it, you can see the saint, the soul rapt in contemplation, the habit of stainless life, of devotion, of enthusiasm for high ideals. Such a being must have stood out conspicuously among his fellows ; the facts of his life would have been the ground of the faith in his genius ; and when his early death endeared and sanctified his memory, loving grief would generously grant him the laurels which he had never worn.

It falls now to me to tell his short story, and to edit the poems which are his true and enduring title to mortal fame.

Digby Mackworth Dolben was born February 8, 1848, in Guernsey. His home was Finedon Hall, in

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Northamptonshire. His father was a Mackworth, his mother a Dolben. He was the youngest of a family of three sons and a daughter, who is now the only survivor.<sup>1</sup> His father, who inherited a strong protestant tradition, and had the reputation of maintaining it, must have educated him from infancy in the strictest religious creeds and motives: he sent him also to a private school, Mr. Tabor's at Cheam, where religious instruction was made much of. One of his fellow-pupils there has publicly recorded his influence, and his efforts to awaken in his schoolfellows the religious emotion which, in his passionate regard of all things, was to him, as it was to St. Francis, the only meaning and the true poetry of life. Another of them, Wentworth Beaumont Hankey, who preceded him by one term at Eton, and to whom he was much attached, has his own memoir. Hankey was as worthy a companion as he could ever have met with anywhere. Another, Robert Bickersteth, whose friendship at both schools was also loyal and admiring, remembers that the first letter that he ever had from a school-friend was one

<sup>1</sup> Ellen Mackworth Dolben died Feb. 2, 1912, shortly after the publication of this book, gratified to have seen her duty to her brother accomplished. She assisted me throughout the compilation.

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from Digby, generously congratulating him on winning the prize for which they had both competed. These two and other friendships that he made at Cheam lasted him till his death. It was in January 1862 that he passed on to Eton, and, being billeted in the same Dame's house as myself, was recommended to my care.

I was related through my mother with both Dolbens and Mackworths, indeed my mother's great-grandmother in the direct male line was a Dolben, so that I myself am in some fractional part a Dolben; and the names of Dolben, Mackworth, and Finedon were familiar to me as far back as nursery days, when my mother used to amuse us younger children with tales of her own childhood. A merry, gamesome spirit was not the least of her charms, and that she had been so universal a favourite in her girlhood may have been greatly due to the original pranks with which she would enliven any society whose dulness or gravity provoked her. Among the various scenes of her fund of stories Finedon was one. Her grandfather had once been rector of the parish, and the family associations were continued by occasional visits to Hall or Rectory, in days that seemed to the younger generation to have been unusually supplied with a dignified and long-lived



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aristocracy of generals, baronets and divines, whose features were familiar to me among the many miniatures, silhouettes and other little portraits, mementos of personal affection, that hung in my mother's rooms, and in their eighteenth-century fashions, kindled our imaginations of a strange and remote world.

A story which I well remember will exhibit the keeping of these associations,—though I cannot truly locate it at Finedon,—how my mother espying one of these old-fashioned gentlemen taking a nap by the open window of a garden-room, drew his pigtail through to the outside, and shut the sash down upon it. Her freak, inspired by simple delight in the prospect of the mighty anger and fuss that would ensue when the hero awoke, was fully successful, and the consequent disturbance went on rippling with amusement in her memory for at least seventy-five years. I should lack piety and humour if I neglected this opportunity of according to the absurdity a renewed lease of life.

I had never myself met any of his family until Digby came to Eton, but our sisters were intimate, and we could call each other cousin. As I happened to be captain of the house, I was able without inconvenience to discharge those duties of elder relative which are so

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specially obnoxious to Eton boys. I enrolled Dolben among my fags, and looked after him.

Of the growth of our friendship during the school-terms between his first arrival at Eton and my leaving in July 1863 I could give a more circumstantial account, if the records of my memory were in any order of time, but they are not ; and were I to attempt to make a consecutive tale of them, I should be consciously constructing it on inferences open to all the tricks of memory, especially that incalculable delusion due to shift of knowledge and feeling. Except for a few main facts I shall therefore avoid giving to my narration of his school-life any sequence ; and in questioning my recollections I am persuaded that most of them are of the last six months. I shall reproduce then only that part of the picture which I clearly see. It might have been possible to correct the disorder of my memory had there been existing letters of this early date to help me ; but his family kept none, nor, with a few exceptions, have I been able to discover any beside those which I myself preserved ; and they do not begin until August 1863, when our separation gave rise to a written correspondence. After that date these letters will be the basis of my memoir.

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Of our first meeting I have no recollection ; but I remember him very well as a lower-boy in his broad collar and jacket. He was tall, pale, and of delicate appearance, and though his face was thoughtful and his features intellectual, he would not at that time have been thought good-looking. Indeed he was persistently teased by the little boys for his appearance, his neglectful dress, his abstracted manner, and his incapacity for games at ball. Not that he was inactive ; he had his own pony at home and was fond of riding ; he also became a good swimmer and delighted in open-air bathing ; but his short sight excluded him from the common school-games ; and though the dreaminess which it gave to his expression came to be a characteristic and genuine charm, it was, until it won romantic interpretation, only an awkwardness. He was a boy who evidently needed both protection and sympathy, and I could not have talked to him without discovering the attraction of our similar inclinations and outlook on life.

For, different as we were in physical temperament, different as boys could be, we were both of us terribly serious, determined, and of artistic bent, and had come through the same sort of home-teaching to the same

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mental perplexity. We satisfied our natural bias towards art by poetry, but the magnitude of the religious problems which we had been led up to face was occupying our attention ; it involved both our spiritual and practical interests in life. A sectarian training had provided us with premisses, which, so long as they remained unquestioned, were of overwhelming significance : they dominated everything : the logical situation was appalling : the ordinary conventions of life were to us merely absurd : we regarded the claim of the church in the same way as Cardinal Newman had elaborated it in his writings ; and we were no doubt indirectly influenced by his views, though I had never myself read any controversial books, and had little taste for them. We were in fact both of us Pusey-ites, and if we reacted somewhat differently to the same influences, yet neither of us at that time doubted that our *toga virilis* would be the cassock of a priest or the habit of a monk. How I had first come to imbibe these notions I cannot now perceive, unless, as I think, it was the purely logical effect of Keble's ' Christian Year ', a book regarded in my family as good poetry, and given to us on Sundays to learn by heart. Dolben had lived under the influence of his mother's sister, his

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Aunt Annie, an intellectual and charming lady (as described to me) with strong ecclesiastical sympathies of a mystical sort. Finedon was her home, and she only left it to undertake the charitable care of an invalid friend in Belgravia, where, when Digby visited her, he had full opportunities of seeing and hearing whatever there was of the most extreme high-church ritual and doctrine. There too he met with his cousin the Rev. Euseby Cleaver, of S. Barnabas Church, who must have been a stark ascetic : and with these advantages, as he would have called them, he was naturally far more advanced in the definition and complications of orthodoxy than I could be, especially as my temper was impatient of controversy.

In a school of eight hundred we were of course not the only high-church boys, and there were some ten or twelve who, though we in no sense formed a ‘set’, were known to each other, and united by a sort of freemasonry. Scattered among the different forms and houses, and with different recreations and tastes, we seldom met ; and I could name only three or four with whom I was on actual terms of friendship. Among these, Vincent Stuckey Coles—lately Principal of the Pusey House at Oxford—was preëminent for his

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precocious theological bent and devotion to *the cause*,—for that was one incidental aspect of our common opinions ; he was indeed the recognised authority, and our leader in so far as universal esteem and confidence could give any one such a position amongst us : and I no sooner discovered Dolben's predilections than I introduced him to Coles, who quickly became much attached to him, and served him with kind offices and sound advice on many occasions when he sadly needed it. With such friends as Coles, Hankey, Lionel Muirhead, Bickersteth and Manning, he was well off,—he could not have had more congenial companions ; but without them he would have been miserably isolated at Eton, for he had no common interests of any kind with the average school-boy, scarcely even the burning question of the quality of the food provided to develop our various potentialities. He seemed of a different species, among the little ruffians a saint, among sportive animals a distressful spirit. By what steps our intimacy at first grew I cannot now tell. As neither work nor play threw us together, I saw but little of him during the day : he never even in my last term accompanied me in my frequent visits to S. George's Chapel, where it was my custom to go on short after-fours and sit in

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the north aisle or organ-loft, stealing out at the end of the anthem in time to be not very late for five o'clock school. Our meetings were therefore generally after lock-up, when, if we both had work to do, he would sometimes bring his to my room, but more often I would go uninvited to sit with him. His room looked over the Slough road, a small narrow room with the door at the end of one long side, and a window at the opposite diagonal corner. Against the wall facing the window stood his plain oaken bureau, at which he would sit with his back to the window, while I occupied most of the rest of the room at right angles to him. The clearest picture that I have of him is thus seated, with his hands linked behind his head, tilting his chair backward as he deliberated his careful utterances : or sometimes he would balance it on one leg, and steady himself by keeping the fingers of his outstretched arms in touch with the walls. There was moreover a hole in the boards of the floor, and if the chair-leg went through and precipitated him on to the carpet, that was a part of the performance and gave him a kind of satisfaction. The bureau-lid lay open before him as a desk, and in the top drawer on the right he kept his poems. His face whether grave or laughing was always

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full of thought : he would sometimes throw himself backward as if to escape from the stress of it, or he would lean forward with meditative earnestness and appear to concentrate his attention on the tallow dip, which in its brazen saucer was the only illumination, feeding it anxiously with grease from the point of the snuffers, or snuffing it to the quick till he put it out. When he spoke it was with a gentle voice and slowly as if he pondered every word.

One evening I remember his exhibiting to me how he escaped the necessity of going to the hair-dresser, by burning his hair when it got too long. It was then rather curly rough hair that stood off from his head. He set it alight with the candle in one hand, and when it flared up, he put it out with the other, gravely recommending the practice on the professional theory of sealing the ends of the hair.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Coles writes : ' My recollections of that room include two scenes ; one described by Dolben, how standing—no doubt in a dream—at the window with an inkpot in his hand, he had begun to pour the ink into the road, when he was startled by a remonstrance, " Boy, boy, what are you doing ? " from Balston, whose hat was receiving the stream. The other very characteristic. We had come to know that there was such a thing as a " Retreat ", though how to set about it rather puzzled us. We had reduced our food, and had settled down to devotions consisting eminently of prayers for the soul of K. Henry VI,



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That one's memory should so faithfully have retained so foolish an incident, while it neglected to record any one of our many talks, may be easily explained, but it is none the less annoying. We may very often have spoken on religious matters, but when I try to recall those evenings, it is only of poetry that I think, of our equal enthusiasm for it, and mutual divergence of taste: the conversations themselves perished no doubt of sheer immaturity. I was then reading Shakespeare for the first time, and my imperfect understanding hindered neither my enjoyment nor admiration. I also studied Milton, and carried Keats in my pocket. But Dolben, though I cannot remember that he had any enthusiasm for Shakespeare, was more widely read in poetry than I, as he was also more abreast with the taste of the day. Browning, Mrs Browning, Tennyson

but "after four" our constancy broke down, and (could Dolben have had a fag?) some one was sent for ices.'

[As to the first of these tales, the enormity of the *contretemps* cannot be imagined by one who never knew the beautiful Headmaster. Dr. Balston was as *sans reproche* in dress as in everything else. If he had any blemish it lurked somewhere in the obscurities of Greek syntax. That Dolben emptied the dregs of his inkpot into the road, and that Balston was passing is credible enough; but that the mess fell on to his hat is exaggeration. It is impossible. Providence would never have allowed it. R. B.]

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and Ruskin were the authors of whom he would talk ; and among the poets he ranked Faber, a Romanized clergyman, of whose works I have nothing to say, except that a maudlin hymn of his, when Digby showed it me, provoked my disgust. I used to think that he had written a good many hymns in imitation of Faber, and that it was partly my dislike of that sort of thing which made him unwilling to show me his verses. My own boyish muse was being silenced by my reading of the great poets, and we were mutually coy of exposing our secret productions, which were so antipathetically bad. My last serious poem at school was a sentimental imitation of Spenser, and I remember his reading that. I was also abhorrent towards Ruskin, for I thought him affected, and was too ignorant of painting to understand his sermonizing ; nor could I imagine how another could presume to tell me what I should like or dislike : and well as I loved some of Tennyson's early lyrics, and had them by heart, yet when I heard *The Idylls of the King* praised as if they were the final attainment of all poetry, then I drew into my shell, contented to think that I might be too stupid to understand, but that I could never expect as good a pleasure from following another's taste as I got from

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my own. I remember how I submissively concluded that it must be my own dulness which prevented my admiring Tennyson as much as William Johnson did,—and this no doubt was a very proper conclusion ; and I yielded to the vogue enough to choose from the *Idylls* my speech on the 4th of June, wherewith I indulged the ears of his late majesty K. Edward VII on the year of his marriage ; and I even purchased as gifts to my friends the fashionable volumes which I had never read through. As for Browning, I had no leanings towards him ; but when Digby read me extracts from *Saul*, I responded fairly well, and remember the novelty of the impression to this day. Of Dolben's own verse of this date no scrap remains. One evening when I was sitting in his room and moved to pull out the drawer where he kept his poems, the usual protest was not made. The drawer was empty ; and he told me that he had burned them, every one. I was shocked, and felt some remorse in thinking that it was partly his dislike of my reading them that had led him to destroy them ; and I always regretted their destruction until the other day, when having to consider all his poems in the order of their composition, I realized for the first time that there is nothing of merit dating

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so far back even as a year after this holocaust. The poetry began suddenly in 1865, when, after a few poems of uncertain quality, the true vein was struck, and yielded more and more richly till the end.<sup>1</sup>

Our instinctive attitudes towards poetry were very dissimilar, he regarded it from the emotional, and I from the artistic side ; and he was thus of a much intenser poetic temperament than I, for when he began to write poetry he would never have written on any subject that did not deeply move him, nor would he attend to poetry unless it expressed his own emotions ; and I should say that he liked poetry on account of the power that it had of exciting his valued emotions, and he may perhaps have recognised it as the language of faith. What had led me to poetry was the inexhaustible satisfaction of form, the magic of speech, lying as it seemed to me in the masterly control of the material : it was an art which I hoped to learn.

<sup>1</sup> Since writing the above, my correspondence has unexpectedly recovered five of these burnt poems, preserved by a friend whom he had allowed to copy them. They are altogether immature, but their discovery is useful in sparing us any regret for their fellows. One of them is given, in a note to poem 6, at the end of the volume, because it strongly confirms what I have written concerning the relation between the form and the sentiment of his poems.

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An instinctive rightness was essential, but, given that, I did not suppose that the poet's emotions were in any way better than mine, nor mine than another's: and, though I should not at that time have put it in these words, I think that Dolben imagined poetic form to be the naïve outcome of peculiar personal emotion; just as one imagines in nature the universal mind conquering matter by the urgency of life,—as he himself describes it in his 'Core':

Poetry, the hand that wrings  
(Bruised albeit at the strings)  
Music from the soul of things.

There is a point in art where these two ways merge and unite, but in apprenticeship they are opposite approaches. The poem whence the three lines are quoted, and others—for instance 17, 41, 46, and 49—show complete mastery, but in his earlier work, to press his own imagery, the bruised fingers of the learner are often what mars the music. And as he began by writing 'sentimental trash' so he sometimes relapsed into it. I do not wish to pretend that I was myself in those days free from foolish sentimentality, yet he always showed his poems to me as artistic not emotional efforts, and in so far as I could be of any service to him, my criticism was on the right side.

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Any chronicle of Dolben's doings must record both folly and extravagance, and I should think it very foolish to disguise the characteristics which during his life were so apparent to his friends. I know that it will seem to some that the portrait might have been as well done without so many realistic touches, and that the phenomenal aspects are illustrated at the expense of his inner life of high purpose and devotion : but the temper of his spirit cannot be mistaken ; it is amply expressed and has its own permanent witness in the poems ; whereas the actual outward appearances are exactly what, if I do not give them, can never be known ; and it is only the existence of truthful detail that can refute the irresponsible hearsay, which by natural selection of its spontaneous variations grows up at last to a coherent falsehood,—like a portrait by Macaulay. His imprudent behaviour too, which invited such lamentable gossip as I have heard, was merely the consequence of his indulging his actual feelings and conscientious opinions in contempt of convention, and in spite of circumstances,—as is often the way with a genius. If I have any hesitation, it is only where I do not sufficiently remember the facts, the actual conduct for instance which drew upon him the

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displeasure of the authorities. That I have forgotten so much is a proof that I cannot have thought these particular religious offences of great moment ; I will describe their nature when their crisis occurred.

But of the most romantic of all his extravagancies, that idealization and adoration of his school-friend, which long after they were parted went on developing in his maturer poems, I have a better memory. It was well known to me in 1863, indeed the burning of the poems may have been due to the existence among them of poems to ' Archie ' : for Dolben would have been almost as reluctant to submit them to me as to the eyes of their unwitting object. However that was, I cannot surely remember how far I understood the situation at the time, and it was not until after his death that I knew the full measure of his passionate attachment, as that must be gauged by the evidence of all the poems. He had however not shrunk from speaking openly of it at that date to Coles, whose advice in any spiritual dilemma he constantly sought or playfully provoked, although, as may be seen in his letters, he made a show of resenting it, and would not, I believe, have sought it, if he had not reserved to himself the liberty of pretending to scorn it. He also

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sent his poems, as fast as he wrote them, to his father, who read them, bad and good, aloud to the family with genuine pride and admiration : and that he took them as he did, and that Digby could rely on his doing so, shows, I think, that there was a very great natural sympathy and emotional likeness between them, and that Digby may have been conscious of inheriting the softness which was so visible in his father's face. But, though not one of us would ever have judged him by a common standard, nor have sought to drag him down from the imaginative heights where he lived above us, yet he kept this one sentiment peculiarly apart, and while we looked on it as a fugitive extravagance, he was doing all that he could to rivet it faster and deeper in his soul.

To understand this ideal affection one must fully recognise that its object was not only altogether worthy, but a person whom it was difficult not to idolize, if one had any tendency that way. Every one who knew Manning, whether as he then was at school, or in manhood, or in his latest years, or whether, as some did, they knew him throughout his life, all without exception spoke of him only in terms of love and admiration : nor have I ever met with any one who



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knew him well, who would admit that for combined grace, amiability and beauty of person and character he had an equal.

As a ' Pusey-ite ' I knew him well, but less intimately than did Coles : indeed our occasional meetings had generally some musical motive. I never accepted his invitation to stay with him in the holidays ; but once, when we were both in London, he introduced me to his family. He attracted me personally as much as any one whom I ever met ; but our lines and general tastes were so differently cast that I looked for no more of friendship than our chance juxtaposition occasioned. He was a little older and taller than Digby, but practically his contemporary, with features of the uncharactered type of beauty, the immanent innocence of Fra Angelico's angels ; and to have fallen into the company of one of those supersensuous beings was a delightful privilege. He was of gentle and perfect manners, and unusual accomplishments ; and if not of intellectual power, yet of great good sense, and with a rare combination of extreme scrupulosity with strong will,—qualities severely tested in a successful public service, where, in positions of high trust and responsibility, he acted firmly and wisely, but none the less

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fretted himself to death with afterthought and fear lest he should not have done well. That was his idiosyncrasy. He was naturally simple and modest, and—at least in his schooldays—full of fun, and affectionately attached to Digby, though he never to the last had any suspicion that his friend was making an idol of him ; no more than Beatrice had of her identification with the Divine Wisdom.

Not that Dolben's idealization was at all Dantesque : —he could never have symbolized Christ as a Gryphon. He was readier to turn symbols into flesh than flesh into symbols ; and his sacramental ecstasies are of this colour. It was his fervid realization of Christ's life on earth, his love for Christ's human personality, that was the heart and motive of his religious devotion. Christ was his friend and his God ; and his perpetual vision of the Man of Sorrows calling him out from the world could not be so vivid as this actual image of living grace that made mortal existence beautiful. The human face full of joy came up between him and the shadowy divine Face, the ' great eyes deep with ruth ' ; and this was the cause of his vain scruples, as it is plainly exhibited in the poems.

Of the exact day and hour when Dolben's *Vita*  
( xxviii )

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*nuova* dawned there is no record, but already in the summer of '63 the mutual friendship between him and Manning was at its full height, and he already perceived the vanity of it, foreseeing that Manning was destined to go out into the world with the certainty of admiration and distinction, while he was pledged to renounce the world and all its delights. The thought of complete separation overclouded his present enjoyment: he even found excuses for making a rule of not going to Manning's room; and when it was doubtful whether or no he should return to Eton, he showed no anxiety to return, though it was only on that condition that he could hope to enjoy his friend's society; and when he did return he recorded his indifference. Manning was never at Finedon—nor did Digby ever visit Manning's home. His affection was of the kind that recognises its imaginative quality, and in spite of attraction instinctively shuns the disillusionment of actual intercourse. In absence it could flourish unhindered, and under that condition it flowered profusely. But in the summer of '63 it was of full growth, nor was anything ever added to it except in his imagination.

Meanwhile the responsible authorities had agreed

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among themselves that Eton was an unsuitable residence for Dolben. Both John Yonge, his tutor, and Thomas Stevens, our Dominie, were men of common-sense and protestant convictions, and they were both of them fully aware of Dolben's disaffection. He crossed himself at meals, and left his queer books about, and behaved generally so as to make himself and his opinions a ridiculous wonder to the boys, although not a word was ever said by any of them in my hearing. Dom, as we called Mr. Stevens, had spoken with me about him, but I have no recollection of his conversations, except that once, in his kind and urgent remonstrances with Digby, he invoked the shade of his illustrious ancestor the Archbishop. As for Yonge, who no doubt consulted with Stevens, there was probably a serious correspondence between him and Digby's father; but again of this I know nothing, and no record remains. I remember that one of Digby's grievances was that Johnny Yonge,—as we called him, though Digby with chilling respect always styled him John,—made his pupils read *Paradise Lost* for 'private business' on Sunday. Milton was to Digby as Luther to a papist: and if Johnny Yonge had thought to engage the *pius vates* as a surreptitious ally, he must

## Memoir

have been much disappointed, for he only gave Dolben an occasion for exhibiting his ecclesiastical contempt. It was my surprise at his unreasonable attitude towards Milton that has caused me to remember these facts : I had been dazed by the magnificence of the first book of *Paradise Lost*, and gave no more heed to its theology then than I do now ; and I tried to bring Digby over to my artistic point of view. My lot was to spend an hour before breakfast on Sunday considering Bp. Wordsworth's notes on the Greek Testament ; the importance of which was impressed on us by the size and cost of his quarto volumes, incomparably bigger than any other book that we carried under our arm into school ; and I envied Digby a tutor like Johnny Yonge with a sound taste in poetry : but I argued in vain. Sunday was altogether a field-day for Digby : *Sunday-questions* gave him a grand opportunity of airing his mediaeval notions ; and he must have enjoyed exercising his malicious ingenuity in dragging them in. He had plenty of humour and wit, and was possessed with a spirit of mischief as wanton as Shelley's. Quite apart from any meaning or value which he may have attached to the uncalled-for confession of his faith, he would have indulged it merely for a natural delight in what-

## *Memoir*

ever was unexpected or out of place, and in the surprise and perplexity that he knew it must cause. Our behaviour to the Masters in those days was none of the best : we found pleasure in provoking them by constant petty annoyances. I look back with only regret and shame to my share in it, and have welcomed the gentler relations that now obtain. Our game of being unmanageable had its time-honoured forms and limits, but if any original fun could be got out of mischievous contravention of rule, the occasion was eagerly exploited. There were naturally some whose character preserved their manners from being contaminated by this local folly ; and among these Coles was one, and Digby should have been another ; he had however his own way of making mischief, and the annoyance that he purposely caused by his Sunday-questions was of a piece with the general fashion of the place : his escapades too were of a like nature, and owed a great part of their pleasure to their being disapproved or forbidden ; if indeed he did not, as I have often thought, take pleasure in surprising and perplexing himself. Among these things were more serious matters, which, since I have no actual memory of them, I can have thought of no importance at the

## *Memoir*

time. There was, as a matter of fact, an Anglican Priory at Ascot, a Lodge of Jesuits at Old Windsor, a Roman Catholic chapel at Slough, and at Clewer a whole full-fledged high-church establishment under Thomas Thellusson Carter, a man of venerable aspect corresponding with his ecclesiastical repute and saintly life. All these institutions had attracted the pilgrim steps of Digby, and to Clewer he had inveigled Manning, though how it came to be known that he went there I cannot guess. I fancy that he sought Carter for confession. As for Ascot Priory there is an amusing and authentic story, but that is of a later date. Johnny Yonge knew about these things, and the crisis seems to have arisen from his detecting Dolben in a stolen visit to the Jesuits. Though the letters prove that I knew all about this at the time, yet I had so completely forgotten it that, had I trusted to my memory, I might have sworn in court that nothing of the sort ever happened within my knowledge. The two friends, however, who accompanied Dolben on that day, are both living and remember every detail of their reception by the Jesuits. It must in some way have come to the ears of the authorities, and the result was a decree that Dolben should leave Eton at Election

## Memoir

[July 30] 1863. It was probably due to his father's anxiety, though his health may have been made the ostensible motive, that he was absent from school during the last weeks of the term. He was in London on July 12th and on Saturday the 13th he went thence to Finedon, and his fate must have been determined on during this absence from school, as he left behind him all his books and chattels, which I packed up and despatched after him. I was myself leaving at Election, but I stayed on after term was over in order to entertain my younger brother, who came to spend a few days with me, in making excursions on the river, and hearing the music at S. George's, where Dr. Elvey had allowed me to compile the anthem list for the week, so that my brother, who was an enthusiastic musician, might hear some of the earlier church music. These facts will explain the letters which Digby wrote to me at that time. The first is from Finedon, probably dating August 1st.

I

[2 enclosures with  
this letter.]

*Dear Bridges*

*The weather is far too hot for fires, or I would sit in the ashes, or in any other suitable manner express my penitence for not having written to you before. Indeed it*



## Memoir

*was not chargeable to lack of time, for my only occupations are going to sleep, teaching dirty little boys, and above all eating gooseberries!! The real reason why I have not written before, is that I waited to hear first from, as it is always pleasantest to write the second letter, when all the news comes from one side. [\* \* \* \*] As you are going to stay at Eton till the 6th don't you think you could manage to come to us for a few days on your way home. It would be very convenient for you, and I should be very sorry to miss your visit. We shall not be going till about the 12th. Home in anticipation is always delightful, in reality a little bit dull, after all the excitement of the latter part of my stay at Eton. I have had a very kind letter from the Rector. He advises me to wait, etc. etc. My books, thanks I know to your exertions, arrived quite safely some time ago. Tell Coles that I by no means approve of his conversation with John, my late lamented tutor: it was to say the least rather cowardly.<sup>1</sup> The post is going, though I have much more to say*

*ever yours affectionately*

*D. Mackworth Dolben.*

*Please write and tell me whether you can come.*

After he had written the above, he must have stuffed two enclosures into the envelope, in order, I suppose, to save himself the trouble of detailing facts. One is the letter which he says that he has received from the

<sup>1</sup> Such expressions as this in Dolben's letters are never unfriendly: it is the security of good feeling that allows the liberties of speech.

## *Memoir*

types of English culture, the indigenous grace of our country-houses, a nature whose indescribable ease and compelling charm overrule all contrarieties, and reconcile all differences, with the adjusted and unquestioning instinct that not chaos itself could have disconcerted or disheartened ; such a paramount harmony of the feminine qualities as makes men think women their superiors. Besides these personal impressions, the picture of the long gabled house in the hot sunshine, the gay garden, the avenue in the summer-night, the early rambles before breakfast, the fruit and the flowers and the family-prayers are the abiding memories of my visit. When I left, Digby asked me, I suspect at his father's suggestion, to write them a commemorative sonnet ; but I had lately outgrown my sentimental muse, and acquitted myself by putting some comic rhymes together in the train. It is to that which he refers in his next letter.

### II

*Dear Bridges*

+ *Inf. Oct. S Laurentii. Di.*

*Many thanks for your letter, we all admired the sonnet. The rhymes were quite à la Browning. I am much distressed about what you say concerning Wales. We go on Saturday. I will write again to you as soon as we arrive at Penmanmawr. We shall probably not*

# Memoir

stay there more than a month. Surely you might manage to come for some part of that time? I have heard from K. He does not tell me anything I cared to know, and not a word about the Rector, whom as yet I have not written to again. I am trying to convince my people that Ruabon is on the whole the most worth seeing place in Wales. All however the guide-book says is that 'there is a fine marble monument of classic design by Nollekins to Sir W. Somebody in the church' there. I have no time, only I wrote, I mean I only wrote, because I thought you would think it strange if I didn't answer your letter.

ever yours affectionately

D Mackworth Dolben.

Digby wrote to me from Wales a letter describing the difficulty that his party of four had in finding suitable lodgings.

## III

I should have written to you before, but it is not always easy to combine letter writing with travelling, and we have been travelling almost without intermission since we left home, wandering all over N. Wales from hotel to hotel in search of lodgings \* \* [various details, then] \* to Bangor where we found rooms in an Hotel (?) very, very dirty indeed. Here I saw Manning and went for a long walk with him on the hills. Also was introduced to his father [ \* \* \* ] The next day we went on to Llanberis, where again the Hotel-master offered, as before at Llanfair, one small bed. However we got rooms in a cottage

## *Memoir*

*in the village. Hence we ascended Snowdon, which I enjoyed more than I can say. At last we heard of a vacant cottage here at Aber, where we came yesterday. Strangely enough just outside the gate we met Manning and his father [again]. He is coming to spend the day here some time this week. I do wish you would come here, I am sure you would enjoy the mountains so much, and to me a companion would make it perfect. [He then regrets that his friend should have met his family for the first time under such unfavourable appearances 'but this is very silly'] Please write to me soon [ \* \* \* ]*

*ever yours affectionately*

*+ D. M. Dolben.*

The next letter is from Finedon in September (?), it carries on the history of his return to Eton.

### IV

*Dear Bridges*

*Many thanks for your letter, which however had been expected and hoped for a long time before it arrived. Seriously I do wish you would write to me a little oftener. It does not matter how short the letter may be, or how little there may be to say. As to your questions, it has been decided after much deliberation that the College of our B. Lady of Eton is the best and most suitable place for me. Therefore I am about to return. I cannot tell whether I am glad or sorry ; it has taken me altogether so much by surprise. My father went down to Eton today, saw John, who 'was very glad I had overcome my silly fancies' etc. etc. Of course I shall be very discreet, and*

## Memoir

generally unexceptionable (I hope) but, alas, who can tell? The frailty of human nature is so great. Isn't it? My last frailty was to go to see a Catholic chapel at Bangor, and as a low mass was just beginning, can I be blamed if I remained on my knees until it was concluded? I have heard nothing from nor of Coles. I will write to you from Eton soon. I cannot hope to find the house very pleasant, and many things can never never be as they have been. (however I have no wish to be sentimental, though I am afraid I have been) I should like to see you, writing is of little use.

ever your affec friend

D. Mackworth Dolben.

[a PS. about photographs omitted.]

To complete the record of this year 1863, with which it is convenient to make a period, since no extant poem of Dolben's has so early a date, he was during the Michaelmas term at Eton, and I at Oxford. I had gone to Eton one day to play in a football match against the school; the only letter that I have from him during this term refers to that visit, its date is Nov. 17th.

### V

*In Fest. S. Hugonis  
Eton College.*

*My dear Bridges,*

*I really feel ashamed to write to you, considering how long ago I ought to have done so. I have been busy with Trials lately, which may in some small degree go*

## Memoir

*for an excuse. I cannot hope to take high since I have been away so much.<sup>1</sup> I am very glad you are coming down here again soon, for I will confess to have been a little disappointed in seeing so little of you at your last visit. Another thing, though I had been looking forward to your visit for weeks, and thinking how much I should have to tell you, when you were here I really could hardly think of what to talk about. It is strange. I may perhaps be excused being in a rather dismal state of mind tonight, for \* \* \* \* [here a tale of how one of the young Puseyites had got into disgrace, which, though the culprit was not a friend of Digby's, had naturally distressed him.] \* \* \* I heard from Coles the other day : he is coming down here next Friday week. Has he come up to Oxford yet? I am going to be confirmed this time. John and I get on very well, as I have quite given up ' Catholic ' Sunday questions, etc. and don't go near Old Windsor, or even Clewer. I have no more time now. ever your affec friend*

*D. Mackworth Dolben.*

This was followed by a letter from home at Christmas (VI), in which he says that he has been persuaded by his ' S. Barnabas cousin, (such a relation is a real treasure,) to join the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament', and he records a concert at Eton ' where

<sup>1</sup> This refers not only to the end of the summer term, but also probably to absence at beginning of Michaelmas term owing to his brother's death, mentioned later. At least one letter to me must be missing.

## *Memoir*

*Manning played most beautifully*’, and then writes of his recent confirmation thus. \* \* \*

*The chapel has been lighted with gas. It was lighted for the first time the evening before the Confirmation: and the chapel was left open all the afternoon. I and Coles spent some time there, and the effects of light and shade were almost more beautiful than anything I have ever seen \* \* \* I liked the Bishop’s charge very much. There was a little too much ‘morality’ or ‘manly’ Christianity in it \* \* not exactly ‘muscular’ and by no means ‘catholic’. You mention Liddon; get a print of S Bernard (price 1s.) and see the marvellous resemblance. Read ‘Romola’ by George Eliot (as the authoress calls herself). Be enthusiastic about Savonarola, I am. Read also a new ‘Life of Savonarola’ just come out. Please write to me again soon, a long letter. ever your affect<sup>te</sup>*

*D. M. Dolben.*

To Digby’s family, who were anxious about his ‘romanizing tendencies’, and to all his friends, who were concerned in his welfare, his conduct in this Michaelmas term was most encouraging. In a contemporary letter Coles wrote, ‘Dolben dates his letter *‘Eton College near Windsor (and Old Windsor, and Clewer and Slough)*, but I can’t help thinking that he ‘has been tied down to behave himself.’ Indeed he

## *Memoir*

seemed to be quieting down. Another of his friends, with whom he was then most intimate, has described him as he was at that time in these words, ‘there  
‘was developing in him a profound sense of personal  
‘unworthiness, which I can only compare to what one  
‘reads of Santa Teresa, or Saint John of the Cross ;  
‘and I well remember the rigorous fasting with which  
‘he prepared himself for his Confirmation and first  
‘Communion.’ His Anglican confirmation satisfied him, and he had exerted himself to make other boys in his Dame’s house attend seriously to their preparation, even assisting them so far as to steal their breakfast-rolls away from them, so that they might go to the Chapel fasting : a ruse of single-hearted intention ; but he could see the humorous side of it, and allow one or two of his friends to share his amusement. And there are no signs of any poems having been written since the holocaust earlier in the year. His letters of this date are on black-edged paper, in mourning for his eldest brother, William Digby, who was in the navy, and had been drowned in crossing the bar at Lagos. The mother had felt her loss very heavily, and it was arranged for her consolation that the other brother, who was also in the navy, should come home



## Memoir

on leave. This is alluded to in the following letter written from Finedon in the Christmas vacation. The opening sentence must refer to some question of mine concerning his poetic silence.

### VII

[Jan. 64.]

*Dear Bridges*

*I cannot even excuse myself by the literary labours you suggest for not having written to you ; I can only say that your first conjecture is right. Indeed I am in too profound a state of vegetation to be capable of much animal life at all. This then is my excuse. Many thanks for your letter [ \* \* \* \* ] You will be glad to hear that my brother who is in New Zealand has got leave to come home. It will be a great comfort to my Mother. I know absolutely nothing about him. Having seen him for 4 weeks in 8 years. It is so strange and uncomfortable. I look anxiously in the Births, Marriages and Deaths for some news of Coles, for I can get none in any other way. Have you heard from him lately ? I think he must be ill, or else . . . . Will you do me a great kindness ? I hardly think so. Merely to send me a copy of those verses of yours called ‘ ————— ’. Purely for my own gratification. No one else shall see them if you had rather not. [Then a request for a photograph to put into a new album, which he describes.] I am to have an introduction to Brother Ignatius<sup>1</sup> of Claydon ! ! ! My*

<sup>1</sup> [Communicated.] The Rev. Joseph Leycester Lyne began the observance of the Rule of St. Benedict in the Reformed

## Memoir

*S Barnabas cousin knows him well. When shall I see you again? Your visits to Eton are not satisfactory, would that you would come to Finedon at Easter.*

*your ever affectionate*

*D. Mackworth Dolben.*

I remember that I sent him the verses. The letters which he wrote to me in this Lent term were destroyed by me because they referred to a comic venture of my own, wherein my anonymity was essential : but I saved one of them (VIII), probably on account of its opening sentence—

*‘ Never that I can remember have I laughed so immoderately, or broken that part of S. Benedict’s rule to such a degree.’*

This letter is in good spirits but offers nothing to my purpose except this first reference to the rule of S. Benedict, and a slight difference in the manner of his

Church of England, at Claydon in Suffolk, at about 1860. He took the name of Ignatius, and presided as Abbot over a small number of monks and nuns. Later he removed to Llanthony in Wales, where a mediaeval Benedictine Abbey had existed. He had been ordained deacon for a curacy in the diocese of Exeter before he began his monastery, but only received priest’s orders late in life from a Bishop who derived his consecration from some Eastern source. Father Ignatius was a preacher of remarkable eloquence. He received some encouragement from Dr. Pusey, and for a short time took a curacy at Margate under Archbishop Tait.

## Memoir

handwriting, due, it is said, to his imitation of Savonarola's script ; and this change is noteworthy as confirming the date of his earliest extant MS. poems ; for it was about this time, or the end of Lent, that he returned to poetry. This must, I think, have been partly occasioned by his enthusiasm for the O. S. B. : as will appear when the poems are examined. I have two letters from him during the Easter vacation, and the second contains an appeal to me to follow him and join the Order :—

### IX

*Maunday Thursday*  
*Finedon [64]*

*Dear Bridges*

*Don't you wonder that I have the face, or rather the hand, to write to you, after the disgraceful way in which I have behaved ? I do—but however if I ever am to write to you again I must write a first letter. My only excuse is that I have been miserably unwell for the last few weeks, and utterly lazy and stupid. I am very sorry that we could not come to your sister's wedding. I should so have enjoyed seeing you, but my brother has just come home, and is only going to stay a few weeks. I have not seen him for three years and a half. I am more than ever interested in the English O. S. B. I have joined the iij Order, and am Br Dominic O. S. B. iij, under which name you are not to direct to me. Mr Stevens was much astonished by receiving a letter for me with*

## Memoir

*B<sup>r</sup> Dom. in the corner. He doubtless thought it personal. I will send the Rules in a few days, and I trust that you will join the Order. [\* \* \*] The Father Superior begged me to come and spend Easter with them, but I am, as you may suppose, not let to. I hope to see you early in next half, and at Midsummer you must come to Finedon. Have you heard that Bp Chapman gave us lectures on the Sacramental System of the Church? Also that Manning played the voluntary at S Georges? Also that Walford<sup>1</sup> has made my acquaintance, and writes me letters commencing 'My dear Friend'? I have been reading Liddon's sermons. They are most wonderful, and beautiful. I long to hear and see him. To think that he was curate here for ever so long, when I was too juvenile to appreciate my advantages! I hope to come up to Oxford at the end of next term. [\* \* \*] Please write soon, very soon. [\* \* \*]*

*ever your affec*

*D. Mackworth Dolben.*

A few days after this came a long letter.

### X

*Dear Bridges*

*Many thanks for your letter. I do like long letters, and could have put up with it had yours been longer than it was. Can you put up with a letter about the O. S. B.? I send you a copy of the iii Order Rules.—I do most heartily wish that you would join it. [. . and here follow four pages about the doings of Father Ignatius . .*

<sup>1</sup> See page civ.

## Memoir

*'Is it not marvellous? Is it not glorious? Is it not miraculous?'* . . and then a P.S. of interest.] \* \* \*  
*At times I almost regret I went back to Eton. I have been disappointed in so many ways—and my health gets worse and worse in spite of Tonics, beer, wine etc. etc. A quiet tutor near Oxford is what I should like. Continual 'staying out' is such waste of time. Tell me if you know of such a man—a MODERATE Catholic if possible. If I do not get better I certainly cannot stay at Eton. 'Oh the bright sweet might have been, bitter sweet as the smile of the Virgin Mother to the penitent Magdalene.'*

*ever your affec*

*+ Dominic O.S.B. iij.*

The envelope also enclosed a tract concerning the English Order of S. Benedict. My interest in that society was Digby's connection with it, which I deplored: and, though I answered him kindly, I do not think that to this day I have ever read the little tract, and I fear that I did not study the Rules with the attention that his devotion in copying them out for me should have ensured. I omitted from the last letter a rhapsody on the joys of Heaven, transcribed verbatim from a letter of Father Ignatius to himself. That he could be affected by its commonplace rhetoric shows his simplicity of heart and genuine feeling. Such words not only left me cold, but even chilled me. It

## Memoir

was difficult to take Ignatius as a prophet in touch with humanity; and I knew him only by a *carte de visite* portrait with extravagant tonsure and ostentatious crucifix. But Digby's father was, no doubt, really distressed, and unwittingly supporting his son's folly by the seriousness of his opposition. As for Ignatius, he was, I suppose, delighted to have caught a live Etonian, while Digby, furnished with a correct habit, imagined himself a mediaeval monk. A letter which Coles has preserved is in order here.

### XI

[Pen and ink  
monogram of the  
Cross with PAX, etc.]

Finedon Hall

Dear Coles

*It seems an age since I heard from you, and I do want a letter, though I rather think you wrote last. But then I have nothing to tell you, and you have all the infinite 'delights of Oxford'. I am not well enough to go back to Eton yet, but I am afraid I must go next week. I don't know what you mean by any work that I have done pro Deo, Ecclesiâ, or anybody else [sic] at Eton. I have done absolutely nothing, nothing permanent. I positively hate the place. It is full of mental temptations that you know nothing of, and you know it is well nigh impossible to attain to anything of the Saintly Life there. I wrote Walford as civil a letter as I could, and begged that he would show both my letters on the subject*

## Memoir

to the Head Master. I trust he will take no notice, but as my father will go down to Eton with me and see Balston I expect there will be a blow-up. I took great pains with my letters to W, and said nothing silly or rude. I sent Bridges the Tract 'All for Jesus' and the 'Rules of iij Order'. He seemed inclined to join it. I thought so at least from a letter I had from him the other day.

\* \* \* Why, why, do you not join it? [Then an exhortation, as to me, to join, because *the restoration of the religious life can alone save the English Church.* \* \* Then about the printing of his 'Prodigal's Introit' in the Union Review. Then] I am finishing some more verses called '*The Prodigal's Benediction*', which I hope to send him [the Editor<sup>1</sup>] soon. [Then an appeal for

<sup>1</sup> The Editor of the *Union Review* was the Rev. F. G. Lee, D.C.L., a notoriously eccentric high-church clergyman, a Doctor of Salamanca. He took the Newdigate verse prize before he had passed Smalls, and the Vice-Chancellor, who knew him only as a University prizeman, admitted him on supplication to the degree of S.C.L., and for that indiscretion was admonished by the Proctors. Lee never took any other degree at Oxford, indeed, it was said that he never even passed his Little-go; but he styled himself S.C.L. Oxon, until his exertions in promoting the Unity of Christendom won him a patron who got his merits more fully recognised at Salamanca: whereupon Mr. Lee proceeded, and changed his S into a D. This is the story as I have often heard it. I do not doubt though I cannot vouch for its truth. F.G.L., D.C.L., edited the *Union Review*, wherein he published several of Dolben's poems. A list of these may be found at the end of this volume in the Note to this page of the Memoir [1914]. The above letter (xi) is interesting as referring to Dolben's quixotic attempt to get Dr. Balston to deplore and amend the secular tone of the school. He must have been aware of the ineffectual quality of his machinery. He never spoke to me of this.

## *Memoir*

subscriptions to the Order, and renewed exhortation to join.] *I am going back to Eton next Thursday, not to stay there long, I expect, as I am but little better. Will you tell me next time you write of a nice tutor near Oxford*

*ever your loving friend*

*in JESU and S. Benedict*

*+ Dominic O. S. B. iij.*

His letters are now for some months signed Dominic ; and the brief life of this signature may limit the duration of his first enthusiasm ; but he remained faithful to the Order much longer than this sign would show. His profession in a religious society was, I think, the immediate cause of his return to poetry, for towards the end of this Lent, and during the Easter vacation, and the following weeks, there is a good deal of verse to be dated, written under the impulse of the monastic motive. Besides a few lyrics (of which I will speak later) there are two long poems in blank verse, amounting altogether to some 400 lines. Very little of all these is worthy to be printed with his better work, and I have no doubt that I am acting as he would have wished in suppressing as much as I do : but the suppression makes an account of them desirable, since they are evidence of his mental condition at this time.



## *Memoir*

The first of them is divided into two sections, called respectively 'The Prodigal's Introit' and 'The Prodigal's Benediction'. These are the meditations of a returned sinner before and after his reconciliation in sacramental communion; and the words, directly addressed to the Divine Paternity, are the expression of a sincere feeling, and must be interpreted to mean that he considered the dedication of himself in the Order of S. Benedict as a return to a path that he had forsaken. But into what far country had he wandered away? By what riotous living had he qualified himself as Prodigal Son? The explanation is unquestionable.

The early childish love for Christ, into which he had devotedly poured his whole being, contained necessarily all the sentiment, the poetry, and the young passion of his rich endowments. It was therefore inevitable that the strong human affection suddenly grown up in his heart, and his consequent recognition of a mortal ideal, should appear to his piety as an infraction of his love for Christ; as indeed, owing to the heterogeneous nature of that emotion, it actually was. This is even explicitly stated by himself in the verses 'My love, and once again my love', where he

## *Memoir*

begs his friend to measure the greatness of his love for him by the fact that he had loved him with the love which he had before devoted wholly to Christ, and had thus for his sake lost his love of Christ.—This then is the Prodigal's sin, from which he now returns,—and he no doubt fought the pain and difficulty of cutting himself off from the natural attraction of human affection by the external artifice of monkish profession. The thought, as it was unhappily conceived, is unsparingly and untruthfully exaggerated : and the sacramental mysticism, with its accessories of candles and incense, is in keeping with the self-imprisonment of the thought. The verse is an undistinguished example of the fashionable imitations of Tennysonian fluency, no better than any of his forgotten imitators could write : a few selected examples will suffice.

*From the ' Introit '.*

' Thus by the loving touch  
Of thy cool priestly hand restore to me  
The weary years the greedy locust ate.

\* \* \* \*

That face I buffeted, and from those eyes  
Lightnings will flash, those eyes I spat upon.  
Ah no ! The fierceness of the noon-day blaze  
Is paled by anguish, and the lightning's flash  
Is quenched in streams of blood.' \* \* \*

( liv )

# Memoir

From the 'Benediction'.

'Behold, Eternal Father, from Thy Throne  
The salutary sacrifice complete.

\*     \*     \*     \*

Peace, peace, the peace of God, that peace is here  
And dwells for ever in these holy walls.  
For here before the altar there is given  
The peace I sought for long and wearily  
Through all the peaceless world and never found,  
Although I ransacked all its richest stores.  
Dreaming the breath of poetry divine  
Could heal my sin-sick soul, dreaming that art  
Could rest these aching eyes, that Nature's voice,  
Conscience, imagination, feeling, sense  
Could help me.'

The reading of these poems makes one see why schoolmasters wish their boys to play games, and one is forced to confess that writers, whose books can lead a boy of 17 to think in this vein of false fancies and affected sentimentality, are as poisonous as simple folk hold them to be.

The second blank-verse poem is called *Vocation*, and is also divided into two parts, the first, 'Vocation B.C.' the second, 'Vocation A.D.'; and there is a 'Sequel'. It would seem to have been written later than 'The Prodigal', no doubt at Eton during the summer term, the Sequel latest of all; and it is even more closely interpretative of his religious dedication. 'Vocation B.C.,'—the motive of which is to show how a pagan

## *Memoir*

might have had a mystical love of God, analogous to a Christian's emotion,—is a strange forecast of his own subsequent affinity with Greek thought ; it begins thus

‘ I was a shepherd’s son, my father lived  
In Delos, half way up the Cynthian height  
Our cottage stood.’

and the pagan boy tells of his love for Nature, and how, attracted to a shrine of Apollo, he had intimations of divinity, and he argues

‘ If thus divinely fair  
This image, carved in cold unfeeling stone  
What must he be, the living god himself !  
My whole soul longs to see him as he is  
In all the glory of immortal youth,  
Clothed in white samite.’ <sup>1</sup>

then with Shelleyian use of a magic boat, he makes voyage to Olympos, and after a vision of heaven his rhapsody ends with this line,

‘ Soon very soon, Apollo, O my love ! ’

the poem is concluded by a reflection of the narrator ; and here is the meaning of the whole,

‘ Then was it all a waste that bright young life  
And that long love an idle boyish dream ?  
Or may it not have been that in that hour,  
That bitter hour of most extreme despair,

---

<sup>1</sup> It is strange to think of Cory copying out this.

## *Memoir*

The God of beauty came across the waste  
Tingeing the frozen snow with Royal Blood,  
That Brows crowned not with amaranth but with thorn  
Bent over him,' etc., etc.

These verses were much admired by Mr. Mackworth Dolben, and in them he received a sign that his son was a poet. He was rightly assured, but in the verses themselves, however original or precocious they may have appeared, there is nothing, except the poet's direct method, and instinctive grasp of the matter : their very smoothness, which was probably the imposing quality, is of no artistic accomplishment ; and 'Vocation A. D.' though the subject is near to him, and indeed the situation his very own, is no better. This section begins thus,

' I hear Him call—His Voice comes unto me,  
As if a breeze from that warm Eastern shore  
Had blown across the desert waste of time,  
And thawed the bands which this cold century  
Had frozen round my heart,' etc.

But the third section, the 'Sequel', is stronger. The argument here is in the soliloquy of a monk who was tired of the cloister, and longed after pagan joys. Now this represents Digby's own situation in what he considered his hours of 'mental temptation', which became, it may be assumed, more and more frequent,

## Memoir

and their allurements stronger, as his school-books brought him into contact with Greek poetry : and he himself distinguished this poem above its fellows by carefully revising it ;—there are four different copies. Certain freaks of humour in the manner of Browning damaged the earlier versions, but these were gradually excluded, and other changes made, until the whole took the form given below on p. 5. The comparison of the beauty of Truth to a vision of distant hills had full contemporary appreciation.

Of the group of lyrical poems written between Christmas '63 and July '64, the first in his MS. book is *Homo factus est*, and it is printed the first in this collection. This hymn has been the most generally known of all the poems. It was much admired by William Cory, who copied it <sup>1</sup> and the whole of *Vocation*, with the *Sis licet felix*, and some other early poems ; and from his MS. his friends took other copies.

<sup>1</sup> This was after Dolben's death, in the summer of 1868. Mrs. Cornish tells me how she then witnessed Wm. Cory's enthusiasm, as he appeared at his pupil-room doorway in the Christopher Yard, crowquill in hand, and heard him say that the *Homo factus est* was 'better than Newman'. He especially admired the S. Michael stanza, and marvelled that it could have been written by a schoolboy. Cory's copies were strangely inaccurate : an account of them is given in Notes to poem 46.

## Memoir

The second is a poem of nine stanzas, beginning *I love the river as it slides*. It has no poetic merit, and adds nothing to the better poems.

The third is a poem of ten stanzas, called *My Treasury*; the first two stanzas are as follows,

I do not think, or ask or fear  
What may the future be,—  
Knowing that neither time nor change  
Can wrest the past from me :

That treasury of golden days  
Those bright sweet hours that shine  
Like stars amid a gloomy sky  
Must be for ever mine.

at stanza 6 it continues thus

Like the islands of the Blessed  
Where the sunbeams ever glow,  
Where the winter never rages  
And the wild winds never blow.  
So stand those treasury-halls of mine.

\* \* \* \*

These verses are of no special excellence,—the above quotation gives the best of them,—but their sentiment is so unexpected, and so unlike the picture which one might be led to make of Dolben's mind, that they have a peculiar interest: for he here deliberately states, in almost prosaic terms, that his past experience of human joys is the one solid pleasure of his life,

## Memoir

a memory which nothing can spoil or darken, and he truthfully gives the lie to the false sentimentality of the lines quoted from *Benediction* on p. lv. Now Dolben habitually lived in a world of shifting and conflicting dreams and ideals, and in his poetry he so very seldom allows himself to appear to rest on what may be called the solid satisfactions of life, that one is grateful for this definite statement that they could and did appeal to him in their full force and significance, and that, in his many-sided nature, their stronghold was unshaken. This stands out now and again in the poems, especially in the well-known lines to his mother, and in the many tender references to his home-life and friendships, conspicuous among the most original beauties: and if this field of emotion is generally concealed by the anguish or ecstasy of his mental conflict, it should still always be assumed as the solid basis of his character; for beneath all his vagaries it made him a reasonable and sympathetic companion; and indeed without it his bright and playful humour could not have existed, for that quality presupposes a wide grasp of humanity. I should be inclined to think that it was precisely because these 'human-hearted' truths were solid and unquestioned,



## *Memoir*

that they did not appeal to him in those days as subjects for poetry : with his appreciation of Greek art they all won poetic aspect, and appear therefore in the later poems. In one of which (No. 40) he actually remembers his old Treasury and inserts it by name. To me, as may be seen, he preferred to show his reasonable note, and would apologise for his sentimentality.

The fourth lyric of 24 lines,

O Love, first love, comes gently through the wood.

reveals, especially in this initial line, the charm which was to characterise his best work, but it is poorly written and adds nothing to ' *Sis licet felix*'. I have no hesitation in suppressing it.

The fifth poem of this batch consists of 29 accentual hexameters<sup>1</sup> called 'His sheaves with him'. It is an ecclesiastical view of the Last Judgment, and has some connection with the O. S. B. as these lines from it will show :

'Then shall they ask and say "Who is this coming up from the  
desert ?  
And who are these that follow of every nation and country,

<sup>1</sup> I am told that this poem is somewhat closely imitated from Dr. Neale's 'Seven Sleepers of Ephesus'.

## Memoir

Of every people and tongue from the uttermost ends of the wide world ? ”

Then shall the answer be, “ this is Benedict, Father of Martyrs, Father of countless Saints, of Bishops, Confessors, and Virgins.

etc. . . etc. . . and it ends thus,

See, he leads them on with songs of triumph Eternal  
Not to an earthly convent, but Shushan, the palace of lilies,  
There to behold the Beloved for ever and ever and ever.

The sixth and last of these poems is a translation of the hymn *Amorem sensus*. I have set it in the book on account of the severity of its style, which, as it is rare with him, forbids its exclusion.

This digression on the early poems has been no interruption of the memoir. It shows that this period, up to the end of summer 1864, was the apprenticeship of his poetry, and it gives an unimpeachable account of his state of mind at that time. There is evidence *first* of his simple home-affections ; *secondly* of his religious love for Christ, which he had now thought to secure by joining an Anglican monastic order ; *thirdly* there is the idealization of his friend ; *fourthly* the growing influence of Greek poetry and thought. His subsequent history is the strife of these elements, as shown in his poetry, itself constituting a *fifth* element : for the full consciousness of poetic power

## *Memoir*

was now awakened in him ; and this gave another aspect to all his various moods, because he consciously used these with artistic aim as poetic inspiration and material ; and whatever mood of his own he chose for poetic expression, he subordinates its actual personal values to its most forcible representation, and for the sake of poetic effect, isolates it and pushes it to its extreme. And the mood thus heightened by indulgence must have returned again with greater force upon him. Now, although in description we may be compelled to separate off emotions and moods, and to assort them under different heads, yet we know that a human soul or character is not composed in this way by mixing, and we do not expect our artificial analysis to look like the real thing. But in Dolben's poetry the various elements are much more easily perceived than their harmony ; and his moods may be quite fairly considered to be separate forces really at strife within him, as his reason consciously indulged them one at a time, and thus heightened their discordance to a romantic pitch, which became recognised by him as itself poetic, and obstinately valued for the bitter-sweet of its irreconcilable antinomies.

The poems just mentioned are the chief record of

## *Memoir*

this summer term. His sister who went down to Eton on the fourth of June with some friends, found him ill with neuralgia, and spent most of the day sitting with him in his room. In July he got leave for the Harrow match, but broke parole, and ran off to his favourite Priory at Ascot, where the ecclesiastical attractions happened to lie thick. He had probably heard of his opportunity from his 'Superior', Ignatius. He refers to this escapade in his next letter, and I am able to give a nearly contemporaneous record of it from one of Coles' letters, in which he wrote to me,

'My Sunday at Eton was most charming. Dolben gave me a full account of his meeting with Father Ignatius and Dr. Pusey. It was at Ascot Priory near Windsor, where Miss Sellon has a convent. . . . Dolben slept in an outhouse with Ignatius, and was wakened by Dr. Pusey "thumping at the door" [Brothers Ignatius and Dominic, he cried, I am waiting for you to celebrate the Holy Communion] He said offices with them & Miss Sellon. She gave him a solemn audience, sitting in her chair with her pastoral staff at her side—she is an ordained Abbess.—All this took place when he had leave for the Harrow match.'

To sleep in the outhouse of a nunnery when you

## Memoir

were supposed to be in Chesham Place, and to be called in the morning by the great Dr. Pusey himself 'thumping at the door', must have been very satisfactory to the truant. I do not know how the proceedings were actually condoned,—Dr. Pusey may be wholly acquitted of complicity. It was, I suppose, the occasion of his admission into the 'Second Order of St. Benedict', and it served, with similar excitements, to make his conscience at ease in the Anglican fold. I have no letter from him before the summer holidays, when, apparently in answer to an invitation from me, he wrote thus

### XII

*Derwent House, Portinscale.*

*Keswick. [Aug. 64]*

+ *Pax*

*Of your charity pray for the second order of our B. Father S. Benedict.*

*Dear Bridges*

*It has been very wrong of me not to have written to you for so long. I am very anxious to see you. I wish we could manage—we are at Portingscale, near Keswick, in Cumberland. We go back to Finedon about the beginning of September, for one of my cousins' wedding. There is nothing that I should like better than to come to Rochdale, but I do not see how I can—these holidays—that is to say they will not let me. You see my brother*

## Memoir

*being away, they like to have me with them as much as possible—you will understand. But could you not come to Finedon in September. My father and mother would both be delighted—and you know my feelings on the subject.*

*I have so much to tell you about a certain visit I paid to Ascot Priory—where I met my Superior, Miss Sellon and Dr Pusey, with whom I spent two delightful days. If you are not yet converted to the Father, I flatter myself that I shall convert you. Do come if you possibly can, and write soon and let me know, though I don't deserve it perhaps*

*ever yours affectionately  
+ Br Dominic O. S. B. ij.*

I had hoped that Digby, being in Cumberland, would pay me a visit in Lancashire on his way home. My journey to Northamptonshire was more difficult to bring about, and we did not meet, as the next letters show.

### XIII

*Flemings Hotel*

*Rossthwaite [Aug. 64]*

*Keswick.*

*Pax +*

*Of your charity pray for the order  
of our B Father S Benedict.*

*Dear Bridges*

*I have waited all this time in hopes of moving my 'stern parients' resolution, but they will not let me come to Rochdale these holidays, declaring that they cannot*

## Memoir

*spare me. I am very sorry, as I had so much looked forward to coming to see you, but it cannot be helped. Will you not then come to Finedon, as really I must see you some time this summer? Please let me know at once, lest your visit should clash with Coles', who I hope is coming some time in September! Only, only let me apply that little sentence of yours (which I would digest if I could) to yourself 'you must come'. I have so much to tell you, and ask you, and it seems years since I saw you; [ \* \* \* \* ] we shall be back on the 1st, do write, and tell me when you will come by RETURN OF POST (though no one asked to write in that manner ever does) [Then the following quotation which he says is worth all the rest of the Golden Legend put together]*

*'Alas the world is full of peril!*

*The path that runs through the fairest meads,*

*On the sunniest side of the valley, leads*

*Into a region bleak and sterile!*

*Alike in the highborn and the lowly*

*The will is feeble, and passion strong.*

*We cannot sever right from wrong:*

*Some falsehood mingles with all truth;*

*Nor is it strange the heart of youth*

*Should waver and comprehend but slowly*

*The things that are holy and unholy!*

*But in this sacred and calm retreat*

*We are all well and safely shielded*

*From winds that blow, and waves that beat,*

*From the cold and rain and blighting heat,*

*To which the strongest hearts have yielded.*

*Here we stand as the virgins seven*

## Memoir

*For our Celestial Bridegroom yearning :  
Our hearts are lamps for ever burning  
With a steady and unwavering flame,  
Pointing upwards ever the same,  
Steadily upwards towards the Heaven.'*

*I have copied these lines lest you should never have noticed them. They are such a beautiful description of the religious life.*

*Return of post.*

*ever your affec*

*+ Dominic O. S. B. ij.*

I had gone to Wales, whence I wrote to him as this reply shows.

### XIV

*Finedon Hall*

*Dear Bridges*

[Sept. 3 64]

*Many thanks for your letter. I quite see that I could not have had an answer by return of post. I hope you enjoyed Wales. Please thank Mr. O— very much for me. I wish that I could have accepted his kind invitation—But what can I do? I am allowed to go absolutely nowhere. Give my best love to Coles and Manning when you see them. It would have been so delightful if I could have come. [\* \* \* \*] As to your coming to Finedon. We shall be delighted to see you any day after the 8<sup>th</sup>. You must come for a week, longer if you will. Please write soon and tell me what day you will come. Are you not made happy by Tennyson's new volume? It was worth all one's long waiting and expectation indeed. Will you pardon a little disquisition on the Assumption?*

[Here follows the disquisition of nearly 4 pages, intending to persuade that the body of the Virgin



## Memoir

Mary had been taken up uncorrupted into Heaven ; and defending himself from Mariolatry, which I possibly had imputed to him.]

*I do so look forward to your coming. We will go to the old Benedictine Abbey of Peterbro'. Tell Coles that I am sorry he has not managed to come to Finedon, which he either cannot or will not do*

*ever your affec*

*+ Dominic O. S. B. ij*

Tennyson's volume was Enoch Arden. I remember reading it, without all Digby's enthusiasm, in the hot sun on a treeless cricket-field waiting for my innings.

I did not go to Finedon, and he returned to Eton for the Michaelmas term, and finally left the school at Xmas. I have no record of the date of this term. His next letter implies intermediate correspondence : it was written from London in December, probably on his way home.

### XV

[Dec. 64

London]

*My dear Bridges.*

*I do not know whether you have gone down yet, but I send this to Oxford to be forwarded. If you really wish me to come to Rochdale I think the only chance of their letting me come would be for Mrs Molesworth to write to my Mother on the subject. I do not [see] what*

( lxix )

## *Memoir*

*possible excuse there could then be for not letting me go. A miserable man has been found in Rutlandshire, named Pritchard [sic], of whom the new Bishop of Peterbro' (!) has a high opinion, but I shall do all I can not to go to him. Coles says that perhaps Mr Urquhart would take me, but I am afraid he would be too extreme for my father. If I could get to Oxford I should not much care who the tutor was. I am at present with Fr Cleaver in Gower St, but go home on Tuesday. Might I come to you after Xmas. [here follows an account of some of the ecclesiastical attractions of his cousin's connection, with a discussion of the practicability of a scheme to promote some kind of alliance between Churchmen at the different public schools.]*

*ever your aff D. M. Dolben.*

*Do not call me Br Dominic. It is only Brothers O. S. B. who should do so.*

Eton had never agreed with Digby; he was constantly ailing, and it was judged that if he was to be up to the standard of Balliol scholarship, he must spend some months with a private tutor. The difficulty of finding one who should be acceptable to both father and son at once arose, and at intervals recurred: but this was a piece of bad luck, for the 'miserable man' who was first chosen soon won Digby's respect and affection: he was comfortable with him, and never met with an unkindler mishap than when in the follow-

## *Memoir*

ing summer Mr. Prichard was compelled by severe illness to dismiss all his pupils. Digby's generic contempt would in his irresponsible chat have been applied to any unknown clergyman who had not 'catholic views'. But before he went to Constantine Prichard, he paid me a visit at Oxford.

### XVI

*Finedon Hall [Feb. 65]  
Feast of the Purification.*

*My dear Bridges*

*I am really very sorry not to have written to you for such an age. I can assure you that my holidays have been as dull as your vacation can possibly have been. About Rochdale, I was so much disappointed that I could not make up my mind to write to you afterwards. I had looked forward very much to making acquaintance with your (must I use the word?) 'people', and most of all your brother. Besides there is yourself with whom I think I am only acquainted to a certain degree. I am about to go to a most dreary tutor, with grey hair, situated in the midst of a vast ploughed field, with a young wife, one other pupil, and endless Greek grammar. But I have got leave first to come up to Oxford for a few days. A very ancient individual of the name of White, living by herself, is I believe to take me in. If not could I sleep at Corpus or Balliol? Please let me know this. I feel rather alarmed at the prospect of my visit in some respects. I think I shall come on Monday week, but am not sure*

## *Memoir*

[\* \* \*]. *I think it must be pleasant to be able (like Coles) to be continually jubilant over the spread of Catholicity—yet sometimes I feel so tired of it all, which is wrong. Will Mr O be at Oxford when I come? I have heard so much about him that I want to judge for myself. In conclusion let me assure you that you are quite right, and that I never can be offended (with you)*

*ever your affect*

*D. M. Dolben.*

Of this visit to Oxford I have but a hazy remembrance. He came there to me at my invitation, that we might meet at last after all our vain attempts, and also to see Oxford—now the favourite ideal home of his more immediate and practical hopes,—and to make personal acquaintance with the friends of his friends, whom he knew only by name. Manning was still at Eton, Coles was at Boughrood with De Winton, so that, except Muirhead, I was almost his only intimate link with the place. That I have no special impression of him as he then appeared to me, after a separation of sixteen months, shows that he had not changed much in the interval; and we no doubt spent our time in matters as familiar to me as they were new to him. It was at this visit, and only then, that he met Gerard Hopkins: but he must have been a good deal

## Memoir

with him, for Gerard conceived a high admiration for him, and always spoke of him afterwards with great affection. It was understood that he would be coming up again later in the term ; but he did not, and his next letter to me was from Mr. Prichard's, his private tutor, at Luffenham ; whence his maturer poems now begin to be dated, and where I had addressed him letters at the beginning of the Easter vacation, having heard nothing from him.

### XVII

*S. Luffenham Rectory  
Leicester. [Spring 65.]*

*My dear Bridges*

*It seems somewhat odd, that from a certain morning last February, when I departed from C.C.C. Oxford, until yesterday afternoon, I should neither have seen anything of, nor heard anything from you. I found your letters awaiting me here as I have been spending the last week in London, where I went to consult the celebrated Mr Bowman, for the range of my vision, never very long, was getting so rapidly shorter, that I began to be afraid that I should never see some pleasant things any more, which idea (though universally laughed at) proved to be more possible than even I myself had believed. What I always thought merely short-sight was something the matter with the eyes themselves. However it is hoped that it may be stopped. I tell you of these facts (though*

( lxxiii )

## Memoir

certainly not ‘circumstances of general interest’) first, that you may know how nearly an Establishment, which I will not more particularly mention, missed having a blind priest. Secondly, because this affair prevented my visit to Oxford—for my chance of getting into Balliol is so very small, that it was insisted that I should return at once to this stronghold of Greek grammar and Euclid. But I am determined that nothing shall prevent my coming to Rochdale this year, probably in August. This sentence, please understand, refers to parental scruples, not to my forcing the doors of Dr Molesworth’s Vicarage, as might at first sight appear. I hope the long letter, which you could have written but didn’t, is still possible.—I hate to hear the very name of Oxford now there is no chance of my seeing it before the Autumn.—but a large sheet, such as Coles’ monogrammed paper, filled with news of that town, would be truly acceptable. However London was charming. S. Albans and the Academy most satisfactory, not to speak of other more worldly and less intellectual enjoyments. Will Coles write to me, or will he not? Ask him.

ever y<sup>rs</sup> affec

D. Mackworth Dolben.

In the above letter ‘the Establishment which he will not more particularly mention’ is the first allusion to a Brotherhood, or the scheme of a Brotherhood, among himself and his friends; and this, as will appear in other letters, was to him a very real prospect. My memories of it are conflicting, but I will put them

## *Memoir*

together here. The essence of this brotherhood was, of course, nothing more than the natural projection into the future of the present conditions of friendship and religious conviction already binding us together. In so far as it was in any sense a deliberate scheme or plan, it no doubt appealed with different force to each one of us. It was, I suppose, the same sort of idea that had grown up between Wm. Morris and his friends, ten years earlier, at Oxford. For myself I can say that the only definite plan of the kind which had seriously influenced me, was an understanding between my younger brother and myself that we would always live together ; and such was our affection that I think now that nothing but his early death could have prevented its realization : and it is possible that Digby found a promise of stability in this to serve as a nucleus for his much wider projects. Whether that were so or not, he had built up with varying detail a very active and desirable society, of which I might remember more had I looked forward to it more confidently. He was to decide everything, and I, who was to be the head of the community, could never of course disagree with him. These castles or monasteries in the air were a source of pleasure to him, and he would

## *Memoir*

even choose their sites. For though it was plain there could be but one, yet the charm of the future lies in its indefinite possibilities, and there were at different times a good many: Finedon Hall itself could not escape. I remember very well, as we sat one day chatting together in his little room at Stevens', he began scheming how, like St. Gregory, he would make a monastery of his father's house, if ever it should fall into this possession. So he would rejoice openly if any of the 'Brothers' had prospects of wealth; it added to the many mansions of his ideal establishment. How far others shared in these dreams I cannot say, but there exists a pre-raphaelite painting made by one of them of the 'Foundation of Eton College', wherein, on a fair and flowery water-mead, the attendant witnesses are the patron or name-saints of some of the future brothers of this society, for which Dolben had already invented a title.<sup>1</sup> He and Coles and I are all there, under that disguise, with the orthodox habits and emblems.

As for his eyesight, Bowman's treatment seems to have been successful, for I do not think that he ever had further need to consult him.

<sup>1</sup> This is given in the dating of letter xx and in xxii.



## Memoir

After this Lent term at Luffenham, he went again with his family to the lakes, whence his next letter is dated. Gerard Hopkins, whom I had invited to Rochdale with him, replied that he could not come, adding, 'else nothing could have been so delightful as to meet you and Coles and Dolben [\* \*] I have written letters without end to the latter without a whiff of answer.'

### XVIII

*The Tourists Hotel*

*Rossthwaite*

*Cumberland [Aug 65]*

*My dear Bridges*

*I repeat with sorrow 'Rossthwaite Cumberland'. I certainly ought to have written to you, but I have been going about so much that I do not think I ever got your last letter. They would not let me come to Rochdale on my way here, but I may go when we return, but, but that will be at the beginning of September. I could come to you any day from the 8<sup>th</sup> till the 12<sup>th</sup>. I do hope this will do for you. I should like to have seen Coles for some things very much, but it was quite impossible for me to come about his time. I am afraid I remember something you said about going away in September, but perhaps you may have changed, and it may be possible for me to come after all. perhaps if you would believe, could rather know, how very much I have desired to come you would try and make it possible. I know nothing about why or where you are going, but could you not go first and come back*

( lxxvii. )

## Memoir

*afterwards? Instead of going [erasure] I mean to say now. I am so sorry that your Bradshaw extracts are of no use to me. I cannot write a letter—having travelled 9 hours yesterday. But do write and let me know just whether after all you can have me. A servant has just entered with Coles' letter. I appealed to my father in despair when I got it whether Rochdale was very far off. He was just going out, but I think, I trust, I shall be able to write tomorrow to say that I am coming in two or three days. It is a great pity so much fuss is necessary, and very absurd*

*yours with a bad headache  
but hopefully*

*Love to Coles.*

*D. M. D.*

The ensuing letter does not exist ; but it must have been shortly after this last that he paid his first and only visit to Rochdale. In his delightful companionship the few days passed quickly, and as we were alone I had much talk with him. I remember especially his modest surprise and genuine pleasure at my enthusiastic praise of his poetry, for he was not satisfied with his own artistry, and did not expect me to be. But there was more than promise in the beauty of his best work. He told me about his life at Luffenham enough to give me a very favourable idea of Mr. Prichard, and a definite picture of his personality which I retain to this day. He had won Digby's esteem, and, when such a relation was established,

## *Memoir*

Digby's natural sympathies would reconcile him to the limitations and inevitable commonplaces of a small country circle. It was evident too that his tutor treated him with great tenderness and skill : he met his mediaevalism with courteous complaisance, and never troubled him with displeasure or opposition ; but when occasion offered would gently state his own attitude, and then, if Digby accepted the challenge, he would advance his reasons. When it came to argument Digby confessed to me that he found him unanswerable ; and I saw that his dogmatic confidence had received a shock. For minds nurtured from childhood in unquestioning submission to a system of religious dogma it is very difficult to break sufficiently away from their position to see the full bearing and breadth of the philosophic objections ; and this step Prichard had led Digby to take. He now saw that his logical position was indefensible, or, at least, that he was not sufficiently armed to defend it. Something had to be shifted, and he did not know what.

Now I rejoiced at this, for I had an unconquerable repugnance to the full-blown Roman theology, whither, as I feared, Digby was drifting ; and in those talks with him I made also the same step that he had

## *Memoir*

made ; and if I might not perceive the full significance at the time, yet I know the very spot in the garden where we were walking when I saw certain familiar ideas in a new light. The exact tone seems to me to be perfectly caught and fixed in the magical simplicity of his half-suppressed utterance

Suppose it but a fancy that it groaned,  
This dear Creation.

Looking back now to those days I see what a disaster it was that at that moment Mr. Prichard was lying ill with pneumonia, and sending a notice to Mr. Mackworth Dolben that he would be unable to continue the tuition of his son.

That was the news in store for Digby when he returned to Cumberland, and he immediately wrote to my mother, who had meanwhile gone into Suffolk, asking her if she would have any objection to his joining my brother in Yorkshire, if my brother's tutor would take him. The question foresaw the objection, and my step-father dictated a judicious reply, which my mother sent to Digby, very kindly but firmly pointing out that they feared his influence on a somewhat predisposed character ;—she did not wish her son to become a Papist. This letter, until its true

## Memoir

provenance was revealed, distressed Digby, who was on affectionate natural terms with my mother, and he made a bold effort to turn it, with promises of discreet behaviour;<sup>1</sup> but the objection could not be obviated by assurances of intention, and the scheme was abandoned, whether on the plea also of other difficulties, which certainly existed, or only for this one, I do not remember. Digby was thus again searching the world for a tutor. He took me into counsel, and his next letters are all concerned with these affairs. If I give more of them than their interest would seem to justify, it is because, no other letters of his having been preserved, they provide the only actual contact now attainable.

### XIX

*Governor's House*

*Keswick* [Sept 18 (?) 65]

*My dear Bridges*

*Under the circumstances I should like to call you Father Robert, as I write to you for a little assistance and direction, such as it will one day be your duty to afford me, and which now I hope you will give me for kindness sake. Mr Prichard has been, and is still, so ill from a fresh attack of inflammation of the lungs, as to render it impossible for me to go back to him at present.*

<sup>1</sup> Passages omitted from letters.

## Memoir

and as time is so important, if I am ever to get into Balliol, my father thinks it better that I should go to another tutor. Of course the difficulty was to find one in a sufficiently healthy and bracing locality. Then it occurred to me that perhaps it w<sup>d</sup> be possible for Mr Walker to take me, and the situation of Filey seemed as if it would be so good for me. I wrote to Mr<sup>s</sup> Molesworth asking her to tell me whether she thought I should be able to go there, and received the letter which I send you. It is most kind, and I can quite understand how it is that she should think and feel as she does. Nevertheless it distressed me considerably. [\* \* \* \*] Moreover for the present I do wish to live as much as may be as a Catholic, and leave talking for those who know more—for the present. [\* \* \* \*] Please do not think that I consider myself a Martyr, for my reasons for wishing to go to Filey were entirely selfish. I certainly do feel sometimes the want of some one to sympathise with me and help me a little—for my people look on such things as these almost with satisfaction—they must show me the great disadvantage of ‘extreme views’, however ‘veritas est magna’. [\* \* \* \*] I hope you will understand distinctly that I think your mother (to whom I am most grateful for her great kindness to me) has done quite right according to her view of the subject. It is of course unpleasant, but that is no one’s fault. I am not and cannot be sorry for anything outwardly Catholic which I have done, though I do repent most sincerely of going to R. C. Chapels and services, when at Eton—but that is long ago now. Still it is right that I should be punished for it. And now I cannot tell whether you will think well to tell your

## Memoir

mother what I have said, as to promising etc. . . . I only wish you to do as you think will be best. but of course if it could be arranged for me to go to Filey I should be very glad. I am sorry to bother you with such a long piece of work all about myself. I send you some verses, as you were kind enough to wish for them. I send these particular ones partly because something you said at Rochdale reminded me of them. If possible I hope you will write soon. Thanking you for my very pleasant visit to Rochdale believe me

ever y<sup>r</sup> affec  
D. M. D.

XX

Finedon Hall  
[Sept. 65]

(P.S. A week with X——.  
X. will be very rich—And so  
shall the Canons and Brothers  
of the Holy Name)  
My dear Bridges.

Thank you for your letter, which was very satisfactory to me. I confess that, though the letter I sent you<sup>1</sup> was very kindly worded, I did perceive a difference in it when comparing it in my mind with the other letters of your mother—to my mother and myself, not only in sentiment but also in style and expression—a comparison not favourable to the document in your possession. I could wish that I had written to you first, for as you think I had better not go to M<sup>r</sup> W., all this has been useless. But if you could find me a good tutor both my father and

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Molesworth's.

## Memoir

*I would be very grateful. He is fortunately of opinion that confidence may be placed in your judgement—an idea which I quite coincided in. I do not think that he would care what his 'views' were, provided he was really a good tutor. For myself I should not like to go to a thorough protestant—except this I don't mind. Antagonism is all very well for a time—and perhaps to strong-minded people may be a real help. but I am utterly tired of it, and would like a man who would let me alone. Moreover it is somewhat sad to find oneself differing more and more entirely from all one's relations in every religious thought and feeling.*

*To go back to the tutor. The great point is that he should be found at once. I go up to matriculate this November year—so that I should be more than a year with him. It certainly would not do to have one at home. If he were near Oxford I should like it—or on the sea. In Oxford would not do. If you could hear of one and write back to me quickly it would be very kind. The money would not matter—My father does not mind £200—and I suppose few tutors are much more. If none can be found I perhaps may try going to De Winton's. but there seem reasons against it—that is, one of his pupils (\* \* by name) I used to know very well, and do not wish to be with. And now my dear Father R. it is entirely left to you, and I feel it is a natural state of things—a good omen for the future. [\* \* \*] I go to L's on Friday so if you write after then direct [there].*

*What do you mean about 'crossings'.<sup>1</sup> Do you think*

<sup>1</sup> I had probably suggested that this had been a cause of offence.



# Memoir

*it would be best to give them up in protestant society? Please let me know. I am uncertain. I hope you will write soon. I heard from Coles the other day. He is distressed as to his father's living—thinks it would be wrong for him to take it. But as the Rev Gentleman is in good health, this seems an unnecessary anxiety for the present. He will never do for us, I think.<sup>1</sup>*

*ever your affec D. M. D.*

*PS Your letter did me a great deal of good.*

The next is in pencil on a scrap of paper.

## XXI

*My dear Bridges*

*One line to ask you to write to Finedon. My visits are postponed, I being in bed in a dark room. fed on grapes and tea. a sort of feverish attack. Please write soon. Read this if you can and excuse it. ever your affec D M D*

## XXII

*Finedon Sept 30 [65]*

*My dear Bridges*

*Much against the advice of the Doctor, and the will of my Mother, I have believed myself able to write a letter, and have desired a large fire, and partially dressed myself to sit by it. but after having been for a week in a dark room you must not expect my wits to*

<sup>1</sup> This tilt at Coles' prudence is characteristic. He remembers it to make retraction in a subsequent letter. 'us' is of course the Brotherhood.

## Memoir

be very brilliant. I got your letter forwarded from L. this afternoon. why it did not come sooner I cannot say. As to the tutors M<sup>r</sup> P sounds well. I think my father will write. Perhaps after all De Winton will be my fate. For my part N . <sup>1</sup> sounds nice to me, but if he cannot teach of course it would not do. I must thank you for having taken so much trouble. At the same time if you would write again giving a few more particulars about N. which I could show to my father, I sh<sup>d</sup> be glad. To tell you all about it—there are more important things in this world than getting into Balliol even. and indeed there is a place into which we hope to get some day—which needs harder preparation than Oxford, and is well worth all we can give it. Now to go down to Hereford, and remain there a year, with a tutor such as De Winton, and a companion at any rate not Catholic—without a Confessor, without any means of more than monthly Communion, without (must I use it) any ‘Catholic advantages’, this may be a good way to get into Balliol, but not, I think, into Heaven. If I were near Oxford all this would be avoided, therefore if N and V between them could teach me, I should prefer it to any one else.

I am surprised at your liking my U. R. verses. They were written more than a year ago. The want of concentration or anything like power is painful. [a passage concerning a fellow-contributor to the U. R.] I send or will send you (for I am not sure if I can write them to-day) two little pieces of secular verse, selected (out of a mass of religious and sentimental trash in rhyme by

<sup>1</sup> N. a high-church clergyman near Oxford.

## Memoir

me) by Jean Ingelow<sup>1</sup>—which lady, with whom we have picked up an acquaintance, was kind enough to look over my verses!!! in justice to her there was a selection made beforehand—and these are to be printed somewhere or other. Verse-writing is a vanity, I think—notwithstanding it is very kind of you to ask to see more of mine. [\* \* an ecclesiastical paragraph \*] These sentiments if not original are really very orthodox. What did Fr Nihill ask about me? Fr Ignatius, I suppose you know is better—but his life was despaired of at one time. The Monastery is governed by an Etonian: N. . . ., now Br Placidus, is all in all to them now. I do hope and think that his vocation will prove to be a real one. In a few years perhaps the names of Monk and Etonian may not seem so far apart as they do now. Coles shall not be excluded from the Monastery (of which you speak irreverently) but how and where could Miss — be admitted? Her only hope would be a Platonic affection, on the model of S Jerome and S Paula, under the black habit of a Canoness O. S. N.<sup>2</sup> I wish you could get me a little money for the Monastery chapel at Norwich. It will really be disgraceful if the work has to be given up,—now the walls are half-built—and I think it would be a very good thing for the Cause if it were finished by the time of the Congress, for all the clergy will assuredly visit the Monks. Coles has sent me £1. but nobody else thinks they have anything which they could give. It is

<sup>1</sup> Miss Ingelow's poems had at that time considerable vogue. The notes of admiration just below are not, I think, marks of modesty.

<sup>2</sup> These Latin initials are translated in the dating of letter XX.

## Memoir

*very odd. and my own resources are in a bad way. and the Rev Mother Hilda writes touching letters to her dear Br Dominic, and Br Dominic writes still more touching letters to Mother Hilda—stating that he is her servant and her brother. but no money comes of it. I wish you would write again directly and say something favourable about N. I want to do something for —— as he will also have to leave Mr Pritchard.*

*‘ Shall we come out of it all, some day, as one does from a tunnel ?*

*Will it be all at once, without our doing or asking,  
We shall behold clear day, and the trees and meadows  
about us*

*And the faces of friends, and the eyes we loved looking  
at us—*

*Who knows ? Who can say ? It will not do to suppose it.’  
These make up for the whole correspondence of Georginas  
and Marys, and all the other trash contained in Poems  
by A. H. C. But will it not do to suppose it ?*

*ever your affec*

*D. M. D.*

### XXIII

*Finedon Sunday*

*My dear Bridges*

*It has been so good of you to take so much trouble about tutors for me. I really hope that I am to go to Mr N. My father went to see Mr Pindar first who was at Bath, but he afterwards wrote to say that his examining work was so great that he could not take me with proper conscience. If my father goes to see Mr N. I am afraid the cassock will be fatal. I trust he does not always*

*( lxxxviii )*

## Memoir

wear it. I should have written to you before, but that I have not been quite so well again. Should I like this H. V. .? It would be a great objection if he turned out unpleasant. However I am in for it now—my father writes tomorrow. One more thing I must ask you to find out (that is if I go to Mr N.) whether he can take two more pupils, — and—. I fancied that he was anxious to get as many as he could. I am afraid that I must not write any more for my head's sake. Thanking you again

ever y<sup>r</sup> affec

D. M. D

### XXIV

Sunday [Nov. 65]

My dear Bridges

My relatives being at Church, having left me nothing but Breviary, dog, beef-tea, medecine, and thoughts, I must write to you with such pen and paper as I can find. I cannot accuse myself of not remembering your birthday<sup>1</sup>, since I never heard of its date until this morning when I received your letter—nor can I wish you 'many happy returns of the day', which is a custom I object to. but I do most sincerely wish you as many returns as may be well—saying nothing of happiness. 1<sup>st</sup> because the wishing neither brings it, or keeps it away either. (which in 21 years you have doubtless found out, since I have in 17<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>) 2<sup>nd</sup> because happy people are apt to forget something about the prince of this world, and perhaps find it out too late. adding only a hope that in four years I may

<sup>1</sup> Nor can I have reproached him. It was probably my telling him of my 'coming of age' that provoked this sad account of 'happiness'.

## Memoir

*receive your blessing. You were very welcome to see my verses, though I certainly should not have selected them to show you. Did Coles or Hopkins give them you. and why? Please remember to tell me. I will read Dr Pusey's book. I am glad \*\*\* is considered healthy, but am much afraid lest my father will not like Mr N. even though the cassock may not appear, other things may prevent my going. however I hope for the best. I am getting well very slowly, since you ask.*

*ever y<sup>r</sup> affec D. M. D.*

[added]

*I am afraid all hope is over, for my father has just settled to call on Dr Lightfoot, to enquire about Mr N. before seeing him.*

These particular incommodities are not worth sorting out. It is enough to say that Mr. N., who was recommended to me by a college tutor, was certainly too high-church and probably not a sufficiently good scholar to please Mr. Dolben. Canon Liddon was hunting with me. What strikes one most is the total want of communication between demand and supply. The Committee of Appointments was not founded in Oxford until 1892, and now any conditions are quickly suited. The result in Digby's case was that a tutor was selected with whom he was so uncomfortable that he remained with him for only one term. The next

## Memoir

letter is from this new tutor's residence in Lincolnshire. Its opening sentences are paradoxical.

### XXV

[undated, Nov 25 (?) 1865]

*My dear Bridges.*

*I really have very little to say, and feel more inclined to apologize for writing now than for not having written before. But really I want a letter from you. it being a very long time since I heard. It is my first evening at*

*—Vicarage  
Lincoln.*

*which direction please soon make use of. I had dreaded foolishly but inexpressibly going among these utter strangers, and Mr and Mrs——and the one other pupil were continually presenting themselves to my mind in all kinds of distressing forms. However the realities might be worse, though also Oh how much better. Still I mean to be very contented. I have seldom had a greater disappointment than my father's decision as to Mr N. How to spend a year here I cannot think. Pity me. I should not mind even being called 'Poor child', It would be reasonable now. As to Oxford I don't expect ever to see it, or anybody belonging to it, till I matriculate—Lincoln Minster is glorious—but of all the miserable men that these last days produce is not the jocose verger the most revolting? What can be the reason that Protestants build new Cathedrals as they do in the Colonies? since they have absolutely no use for them. I saw Chapel after Chapel which are never entered from one year's end to*



## Memoir

*another. I saw the anointed Altar-stones put as paving-stones near the doors that all might tread on them : the ruins of shrines innumerable in honour of Saints whose relics were thrown away by order of Henry VIII. On the whole a visit to an English Cathedral is not a pleasure. Little S. Hugh, the boy Martyr, still lies under the remains of his shrine. Might we not in our Monastery have a shrine in honour of the boy Martyrs of the Church, S.S. Pancras, William and Hugh? And the choristers, oblates and little monks should be taught to love them as Catholic boys of all ages have done. I don't know how I should get on but for the thought of the O. S. N. I know, I cannot help feeling sure that it will not come to nothing. I beg of your charity that you will write. Your letters always do me good. One must look on the future, and not back to the past*

*ever y<sup>r</sup> affec  
D. M. D.*

After this there is a gap of eight months in the series of Dolben's letters to me. My younger brother died in Feb. 1866, and among the miscellaneous letters that I have kept I have none that makes any reference to that event, which plunged me into deep sorrow at the time, and considerably altered the hopes and prospects of my life. All letters written to me both immediately before and for months after seem to have shared the same fate, whatever it was ; so that there is no actual written record of these eight months ; and



## *Memoir*

Dolben's history depends on the recollection of friends who were with him at that time, and on the dating of the poems, which are now frequent and often full of beauty.

Dolben remained but one term with this tutor in Lincolnshire, and after Easter, in spite of his insuperable prejudice was sent to De Winton at Boughrood in Radnorshire. The event in a manner justified his prejudice, for tutor and pupil were too utterly incongruous to profit by association. Henry De Winton was a first-rate scholar and a good teacher, with such an active habit of mind that a country living would have been intolerable to him had he not contrived opportunities for exercising his talent. He therefore took as many pupils as he could accommodate ; and if he was really happy only with advanced and promising scholars, and naturally grudged the wasteful expenditure of his ability on pass-men, some of them felt the distinction which he could not altogether disguise. His pupils were treated as members of his family, itself a small community, and all testify to his kindness, to his skill and pains in teaching, and to his enthusiasm for the best classical literature. He was also a keen sportsman. The present Provost of Eton, Dr. Warre, who as an old pupil speaks of him with gratitude and

affection, and could equally enjoy work and play, has, among many lively recollections of the river, one sporting story, which, told in his own words, will give a picture of the place. ‘ One evening (says the Provost) we had seen a big fish rising in the pool close by the house, and De Winton said the time to catch him would be in the morning just as it was getting light. Next morning, about five o’clock, an indescribable howling mixed itself with my dreams, and there dawned upon my half-awakened mind a vision of salmon, and the sound of a far-off cry *Warre, bring the gaff!* Needless to say, I was out of bed at once, and just as I was, barefooted in my nightshirt, rushed out over the rocks to the catch. It was a bitterly cold morning, cold enough to prevent my ever forgetting our triumph.’ With such exhilarating incidents, plenty of freedom, and no more severity than is inseparable from grammatical study, the Rectory must have been a model establishment of its kind ; while the host’s conventional orthodoxy and perhaps rather irritable manner—for which there is some evidence—were matters of no moment. It is plain that to such a man Digby must have seemed a most undesirable pupil ; for his scholarship was not sufficiently advanced to be of interest,

while he was full of notions which De Winton must have regarded as an unreasonable annoyance and distraction. 'What is the τέλος of it all?' he would murmur: 'The τέλος, the τέλος, I ask. What is the τέλος?' If the disadvantages of their mutual incompatibility be balanced, one side against the other, no one would judge that De Winton had the best of the bargain. In any case Dolben was glad to escape from Lincolnshire, where he was actually unhappy, and his new fellow-pupils were both socially and intellectually good company. Their mixed society he met without discomposure: as one of them testified very happily in these words, 'Dolben was a really good fellow, and took being laughed at by the others ever so well.' It was in such surroundings that he wrote the most of his best poems.

To attend now to the evidence of these poems:—while Dolben's mediævalism remained unshaken, and was alienating him more and more from the Church of England, the progress of his acquaintance with Greek thought was building up in him a pagan idea of beauty, which, though it was mainly if not entirely æsthetic and artistic, was conquering his mind: and he could keep these two ideals quite apart. Some of

## Memoir

the poems are in purely mediæval sentiment, others are purely pagan, untouched by any Christian influence. Both ideals were felt in their full force, and as his art developed them separately in the poems their antagonism became more active, and the victory, though it was not at all times fully assured, lay with Christianity. It thus followed most naturally,—from the previous leaning of his ideas, and from their present development,—that the earthly ideal of his human affection, which had at first invaded the peace of his religious life, came to be associated with his perfected pagan ideal, and to be considered (at least for poetic purposes) as pagan in essence, and therefore of the nature of sin; and so we find it in the poems at one time revelled in as æsthetic paganism, at another repudiated as spiritual disorder: and he even goes so far as to implicate his friend in these fantastic meshes, and, in a poem which in places recalls the frenzied stanzas of *Sir Eustace Grey*, he exhorts his friend to Repent with him. This must, no doubt, be taken for a somewhat dramatic exhortation to adopt the religious profession, as the only salvation in a world where happiness was a snare of the Devil,<sup>1</sup> yet, even so, the extravagance is

<sup>1</sup> See letter XXIV.

## *Memoir*

inconceivable, and except as poetic imagination it is insincere : for not only were these religious exhortations to his friend never intended for his eye or ear,—which destroys their sincerity—but it is certain that he had never ventured to show him even the earlier sentimental verses written in his praise. Manning had never any notion that Digby indulged in all this trouble and passion on his behalf, and after Digby's death was among those who were first to urge that the poems should be published. He was not much of a judge of poetry, but he was a firm and affectionate believer in Dolben's genius ; he knew his early religious verses, and had been seriously influenced by him to embrace the logical consequences of his mediæval creed. Though in ordinary society he passed for a born artist, yet he had not the artist's profound insight, and lacked appreciation of the severer excellences. His instinctive taste, which was fine and cultivated, was for the slighter forms of art, grace, brightness and pleasant lucidity. He would never have understood the absorbing devotion of Dolben's passion, on whatsoever it might be directed : the strange strife of his friend's emotions would, except as a note of genius, have had little meaning for him. If these facts be considered,

## *Memoir*

the poetry which Dolben wrote to describe those emotions cannot escape the reproach of courting misrepresentation. It is indefensible : but it should be remembered that he would not himself have defended it. He would over-indulge the poetic sentiment of the moment, and afterwards condemn the extravagance. He would often laugh at himself (his sister wrote to me of him) ‘ as if he saw that his poetry had got out of hand ’. And the fault is really a failing in his artistry. Just as a philosopher, when he has chosen his premisses will argue out his system to conclusions altogether at variance with his convictions, so an artist in developing his conceptions may perplex his intention, and be led into extravagant and unpremeditated positions. When Dolben went to Boughrood he was just eighteen years old, and I should say—though I do not wish to anticipate the estimate of his genius—that the poems which he now began to produce will compare with, if they do not as I believe excel, anything that was ever written by any English poet at his age ; and the work is not only of rare promise but occasionally of the rarest attainment, and its beauties are original. If then we find the perplexity of his ideas sometimes leading him astray, this is

## *Memoir*

nothing to wonder at, and there is no place for reproach. The late poem 'Dum agonizatur' is a full illustration of his perplexities.

But of his Greek sympathies he showed little or nothing to his comrades at Boughrood; to them he appeared as a monk, and there are only such memories to record of him. Two of his fellow-pupils have sent me their recollections of him, and allow me to quote their own words. The first, to whom poem 37 was addressed, writes thus,—

'Dolben was in my division at Eton, but we were not much thrown together till we were fellow pupils at Boughrood. When he came there the Rectory was very full, with five pupils as well as a large family of children, so that he was lodged in the village of Llyswen, the other side of the Wye, and consequently was rather outside our life. In September of that year I went back early to work for matriculation at Balliol, and we two were alone together reading for the same purpose. I remember his rebuking me for wanting to read the *Odyssey* with him after dinner: he said that even Monks did not work after dinner. . . . He was greatly taken up with Father Ignatius at that time, and his ideal of life was monastic. He was most amusing about his distaste for going into society, and the feeling of despair which came on him when the carriage drew up at a house where he had to go to a ball. We walked a great deal together, and his talks were always of the religious life, and the associations he looked to form at Oxford. . . . He was most regular at our early bathing in the river a few yards from the house: which cannot, I think, have been good for him. . . . I went into residence at Oxford in October, and I do not think that I ever saw him again. . . . There remains with me a vivid recollection of a pale serious man, rather than

## *Memoir*

boy, of pure and blameless life, looking forward intently to devoting himself to a religious life. He often spoke of one of his friends (—) to me : and I believe he had an ardent admiration for Manning. Some lines of his that I had, referred, I think, to Manning.’

The other, writing to a friend of mine, has the same picture.

‘ My recollections of Mackworth Dolben are of a young monk of mediæval times. . . . In appearance he was tall and slight, with a complexion of transparent pallor. He had good features, and fine dark melancholy eyes. Do you remember Doré’s picture of a young monk sitting in chapel among a lot of older men, & gazing sadly into vacancy ? he was rather like that. Also Clifford’s picture of Father Damien before he left for the leper settlement in Hawaii reminds me of him. . . . He had arranged the upper part of a bureau in his room with crucifix and candles and vases of flowers, & used to pray there after donning his monastic habit. His religion seemed to me a passion, and I was much affected at times by his fervour. . . . One day we took a holiday and rode sixteen miles over the Black Mountains to Llanthony Abbey,<sup>1</sup> he dressed in the full habit of a Benedictine Monk, and I riding by his side in ordinary costume. You can imagine the sensation he created passing through the Welsh villages. . . . I think he found me more in sympathy than the other pupils, and we became good friends ; though I don’t think he was intimate with any of us ; but he used to write to me from time to time till he died ; and I always preserve an affectionate remembrance of his gentle and kindly nature. I think of him as a young saint so soon called to his rest.’

In the summer of 1866, on his way home from his tutor in Wales, he paid a clandestine visit to Birmingham. Of this he tells in a later letter. Meanwhile

<sup>1</sup> Father Ignatius was not yet established at Llanthony.



## Memoir

in August of that year Gerard Hopkins came to me at Rochdale, and stayed, I think, some weeks. We read Herodotus together. He was so punctilious about the text, and so enjoyed loitering over the difficulties, that I foresaw we should never get through, and broke off from him to go my own way. He had not read more than half of the nine books when he went in for 'Greats'; this did not however prevent his success, and my tutor, Professor Wilson, who was one of the examiners, told me that 'for form' he was by far the best man in the first class. 'Form' was an all-pervading esoteric *cliché* of that hour. Gerard and I had schemed for Dolben to join us at Rochdale, but the following undated scrap from him records the monotony of the situation.

### XXVI

*Finedon Hall*

*Higham Ferrers*

*Dear Bridges*

[Aug 16. 66.]

*I have waited all this time hoping to give you an answer to your most kind invitation. but now I do write I am sorry that it is only to say that it is all but certain that I am not to come. My father is anxious that I should read regularly. This is the reason, and I am obliged to do so if I am ever to get into Balliol in the spring. I shall probably come up in the Autumn for the scholarship. You*

( ci )

## Memoir

*cannot imagine, and if I told you, you would not believe either how much I hoped or how much I was disappointed. I cannot miss another post, but I will write this evening and send a letter tomorrow.*

*ever your affec*

*D. M. D.*

The next that I have, written a month later, rather implies that the promised letter was never written. He had gone with his family to Malvern.

### XXVII

*Harrow Cottage [Sept. 1<sup>st</sup> (?) 66]  
West Malvern.*

*My dear Bridges*

*I am quite aware that I have been inexcusably rude, to say nothing of ingratitude, in not having written to you before. You must forgive me because there is really no reason why you should—which goes some way. At any rate you must know that neither are my pleasures so various nor my chances of seeing my friends so many, but that I would have given a month at least of ordinary existence for a week at Rochdale. The fact is that my father likes me to be with him all the time that I am at home—and now we are here it is quite impossible that I should come. Malvern being intended to ‘set me up’, which no place succeeds in doing,—something unknown obstinately persisting in keeping down. I do hope though that you will be persuaded to come to Finedon at Christmas, It being already about a year since I saw you. Remembering the week I spent at Rochdale last year*

## *Memoir*

*I think that I am somewhat unfortunate, therefore I am entitled to pity, and Finedon to your consideration. Is it not so? [. . . . .] I return to De Winton's in a fortnight and shall not come up to Oxford till January for matriculation, as I am absolutely unable to work hard, even if I wished to do so. I was in Birmingham on my way home from Wales and made acquaintance with our Third Order Brs there. They are exceedingly nice, and might be called 'earnest young men' (if it did not suggest such unpleasant persons)—for their quiet earnestness is a very remarkable contrast to the noisiness of the Bristol Brs. My habit and bare feet created some astonishment in the choir at S. Albans—but on the whole I made great friends with the clergy etc.—One of the priests gave me his blessing in the sacristy after service in a very kind manner. Fr Pollock has been a true friend to our Order, and the greater part of his choir are Brs of our order. I visited the Oratory. Newman was away, but Fr Ryder was most civil, and not at all contemptuous. You have probably heard that the Father Sup<sup>r</sup> has been staying with the Archbishop, and that the Abp has promised to sanction his new constitution etc. Also that the Bp of London has removed the inhibition, and given his 'special consent' to his preaching at S. Michael's Shoreditch. I saw Fr Basil there when I was in London. Father is with him. In great haste*

*ever yr affec*

*D. M. D.*

He did not tell his family of this visit to Birmingham, and it may have been the unconscious lessening of

confidence that made his father keep him so close. ('Father' in the last letter is Ignatius.) There was a fear lest he might run off some day and be irrevocably received into the Roman Communion by Cardinal Newman. And he plainly had contemplated an interview with Newman on this occasion. But his visit was ostensibly to his Anglican brothers of the O. S. B. The link with the Oratory was the presence in Birmingham of Mr. Walford, who as one of the junior masters at Eton had first made Dolben's acquaintance there in 1864, and had since Romanized. As a schoolmaster he had found himself as much out of place at Eton as Dolben was. He had a truer vocation for the religious life, and was thus a great admirer of Dolben there, and encouraged him in his religious leanings : and on one occasion at least they had said offices together. But Dolben, though grateful for his sympathy, had never made a friend of him ; and the notion that at this later date he had any influence in drawing Dolben to the Roman communion is, I think, a mistake. Very shortly after this Gerard Hopkins, who was now a Roman Catholic and had been on a visit to Cardinal Newman at the Oratory, wrote to me as follows. [Sept. 24—66] 'Walford believed that

## *Memoir*

Dolben had been mobbed in Birmingham. He went in his habit without sandals barefoot. I do not know whether it is more funny or affecting to think of.'

This was, so far as I know, Digby's only visit to Birmingham; Hopkins was at that time frequently at the Oratory, and he never heard of any other. But he was present at a Candlemas service in 1867 somewhere with Walford, who gave Coles a circumstantial account of his meeting with him on that occasion.

This letter from Malvern is the last that I have, and whether Dolben ever wrote to me again I cannot say. There is much the same gap in Coles' recollection, dating with him from a visit that he paid to Dolben in the summer. Coles, who had also been De Winton's pupil and was a welcome visitor at Boughrood, went there in July or August of 66 especially to see Dolben, and he remembers finding him living apart in the small house across the river among corn-fields, where the landrails craked a ceaseless accompaniment to their long talks, as he sat with him of an evening. Digby would try to detain Coles beyond the hour when he was strictly expected by his host to return to head-quarters. He was then still conciliated with the Anglican church, and would dress himself in

## Memoir

his monk's habit and prowl about the country at night : and he made on one occasion a long excursion to a neighbouring parish in order to extort absolution from the Vicar, who, to his disgust, would not incur the unusual responsibility of hearing the confession of a minor. Digby told Coles that he thought it high time he was out of his '*stat. pup.*'

It was probably in the Michaelmas term that he began seriously to consider the practical step of Romanizing ; and, if so, that would fully account for his silence ; indeed the difficulty of explaining, apart from the knowledge that I should be uncongenial, would have prevented his writing ; for only active sympathy could overcome his dislike of letter-writing : and it must have been in the winter (66-67) that he told his father that he intended to join the Roman communion. His father, in his distress, said words which widened the breach between them : but he exacted a promise from his son that he would not be received until he should have left Oxford, hoping that something might yet arise to prevent the disaster. Dolben never told me of this treaty.

On May 1 he came up to Oxford to matriculate. He was in weak health and actually fainted in the

## *Memoir*

examination on the next day, and was thus thrown out. He lodged at the Randolph Hotel, and must have left at once after his failure. Neither Hopkins nor I knew of his visit at the time : he had told no one but Coles ; and the chance coincidence of date with a short-lived diary of his old friend alone preserved the facts. Coles was distressed by his talk : he found him in the dilemma depicted in the contemporary poems. His father, disappointed in the plans for Balliol, entered his name at Ch: Ch:, and Digby approved of the change of programme. It was also decided that he should leave De Winton's, and Mr. Prichard being now re-established in health agreed to receive him again. His sister tells me that Digby surprised his father by requesting what seemed a somewhat excessive allowance of money in the event of his going to Ch: Ch:, intending apparently to live at the University, if he went there, in a style very different from his old negligent way of life. Lastly, after his death, there was found among his papers the beginning of a letter to his father asking to be absolved of his promise not to be baptized, in case of any dangerous accident or illness. This was not dated, but was almost certainly written at Mr. Prichard's after his arriving

# *Memoir*

there on June 15th. Thirteen days later he was drowned when bathing in the river Welland, two miles away from South Luffenham Rectory. I make the following extracts from the little memoir of his last days that Mr. Prichard wrote at the time, and sent to the family at Finedon. Mr. Prichard was one of the wisest and kindest of Digby's friends ; and, as he knew him well, his evidence is valuable apart from its being the only picture of Dolben during those last days.

## FROM MR. PRICHARD'S MEMORANDUM.

"Dear Digby Mackworth Dolben came to us on Saturday, June 15 1867, it being intended that he should stay here during the summer and read preparatory to going to Oxford in October. We both had looked forward with the greatest pleasure to his return, having become so much attached to him when he was here two years ago. Once or twice we had seen him since, but only for a passing visit. We had sent the carriage to the train for him earlier in the day, but he had not come, and we had given up expecting him, when we heard a ring at 10 o'clock at night. He was received very gladly, and with a good deal of laughing, in which he joined, as we were accustomed to say that he generally missed his train, and came at unexpected hours. He had grown a good deal since he was here : he was very pale, and to a stranger might have looked in ill health, but I do not think his appearance expressed this.

\* \* \*

On Monday we talked over his reading. He told me what he had been doing lately. His box of books was brought up and unpacked, and we found room in the drawingroom shelves for



# Memoir

his books of poetry etc. We dined at half-past one or two. he generally read on until nearly that time, sitting in the same room with me, as his own room was not ready, \* \* \* If he had read enough he used to construe before dinner : if not, in the afternoon. He seemed to wish to lose no time, and to do thoroughly what he had to do \* \* \* Before dinner I used sometimes to ask him to go into the garden for air and exercise. . . . He would begin a game of croquet, or walk about and talk to Alice, or to the children.

\* \* \*

The younger children used to come in for a few minutes each to say their Latin to me. I asked him if it disturbed him, and he said Oh ! no. as if he liked it. And I could see that he was sometimes much amused by their questions or remarks. He was always gentle and kind with children ; perhaps a little reserved towards them, but his manner expressed tenderness. While reading, myself, in the same room I used sometimes to talk to him, as I could count on his being interested, and on his quickness of apprehension \* \* \*

Our life was very even and uneventful during this fortnight. He seemed quite happy ; much more so than when here before, though then he was not unhappy. But now there was a continual play of mind, as if he was at peace, and had leisure for such enjoyments as his studies and books and conversation gave him. He knew and felt that we all loved him. His playfulness in conversation and quiet perception of humour were great \* \* \* \*

In the evenings he sometimes played chess, which he was learning, or read poetry. On Sunday evenings he read Pascal, and seemed pleased with the extreme beauty of the language.

\* \* \*

[When] they had all gone upstairs to bed, Dolben used to sit on a box at the top of the stairs, outside his room, with quite a levée round him, amusing them, and I sometimes heard their laughter downstairs.

\* \* \*

He did not strike me as looking forward with any particular interest to his Oxford life. He said that he thought he should like Ch: Ch: better than Balliol ; but that he had been much

## Memoir

annoyed at not getting into the latter. He did not tell me—what was the case—that he had been so ill that he had fainted the same day.

I have never known any one of his age,—perhaps none at all—whom it was such a pleasure to converse with and teach. On his own subjects of poetry and knowledge of art his mind was far in advance of mine \* \* \* But on general topics, history, philosophy, classics etc, I felt that he was interested in gaining ideas. His Latin writing was rather drudgery to him \* \* he took much pains with it. \* \* his appreciation of classical poetry was very great. Sophocles was not, I think, his favourite author, but he spoke of the great beauty of the descriptions in the *Œdipus Coloneus*. The last piece he construed to me was the speech of Ajax taking leave of the world before his death. On my asking him whether it was not beautiful, he said “very beautiful” emphatically. I remarked that one could have been content if the play had ended there. He said ‘yes’, and then added with a smile ‘In the *Persæ*, which I read with you when I was here before, there were some scores of lines at the end, with little but *aiāi* in them.’

These were the last words I heard him say in a lesson ; I rather think the last I heard him speak.”

This was on Friday, June 28th, and after he had read the speech of Ajax, he went, late in the afternoon to bathe with Mr. Prichard’s son Walter at a spot where the stream widens into a small pool. The boy could not swim, but had learned to float on his back. Digby was a good swimmer. They had bathed there together before : the conditions were not dangerous, and no apprehension was felt when they did not return. Mr. Prichard’s memorandum tells the story as it came to be known to him, with all the terror, confusion

## *Memoir*

and distress of the moment. What happened was that when they were bathing Digby took the boy on his back and swam across the pool with him. Returning in the same fashion he suddenly sank within a few yards of the bank to which he was swimming. The boy, who was the only witness, had the presence of mind to turn on his back and keep himself afloat, and shout to some reapers in the riverside meadows. They did not at once take alarm, but on the boy's persistently calling they ran to the bank and got him out with difficulty and delay: the water was deep, and none of them could venture in. Digby's body was not found until some hours after. He was buried under the altar at Finedon on July 6th.

\* \* \*

It was the year of the French Exhibition, and I was just starting for Paris, engaged, much against my natural inclinations, in an eight-oared race on the Seine. The incongruity of these consecutive paragraphs is sufficient. I was spared, it is true, the distress of witnessing the inconsolable grief of his home, but it was an added distress not to be able to take one's share in it, and to be absent from the last scene. I did not however at the time feel any of the remorse which,

## *Memoir*

since I came to know the history of his last months, I have never been able quite to shake off, the regret, I mean, that I had for eight months allowed myself almost to lose sight of him. It seems that he hid from me the growing motive of his silence: and I cannot now determine how I interpreted his conduct. He was so irregular a correspondent that his silence, if he did not write, would have suggested nothing: and he had plenty of other friends for whose sake he might well have been neglecting me. Again, his coming up to Oxford had been so constantly imminent, that the expectation of it made other considerations insignificant. I was myself, it is true, drifting fast away from our old religious sympathies in a different direction from him, but I had not even at the time of his death made any change that could have affected our correspondence; and I should have looked in him for a similar effect from the same course of philosophical study.

The last poems, found in his desk and written presumably during the last weeks of his life, tell all that is known. For final words I will let Gerard Hopkins speak. He wrote to me in August 1867 as follows.

‘ I heard of Dolben’s death the day I returned from  
‘ Paris by a letter from —— which had been a week

## *Memoir*

‘ waiting for me. B \* \* \* has since written me a few  
‘ more particulars. I have kept the beginning of  
‘ a letter to you a long time by me but to no purpose  
‘ so far as being more ready to write goes. There is  
‘ very little I have to say. I looked forward to meeting  
‘ Dolben and his being a Catholic more than to any-  
‘ thing. At the same time from never having met him  
‘ but once I find it difficult to realise his death or feel  
‘ as if it were anything to me. You know there can  
‘ very seldom have happened the loss of so much beauty  
‘ (in body and mind and life) and of the promise of  
‘ still more as there has been in his case—seldom,  
‘ I mean, in the whole world, for the conditions w<sup>d</sup>  
‘ not easily come together. At the same time he had  
‘ gone on in a way wh. was wholly and unhappily  
‘ irrational. I want to know whether his family think  
‘ of gathering and publishing, or at least printing, his  
‘ poetry. Perhaps you will like to hear what Dr New-  
‘ man says. “ Yes, we heard all about Dolben. The  
‘ account was very pleasant. He had not given up  
‘ the idea of being a Catholic, but he thought he had  
‘ lived on excitement, and felt he must give himself  
‘ time before he could know whether he was in earnest  
‘ or not. This does not seem to me a wrong frame

‘ of mind. He was up to his death careful in his  
‘ devotional exercises. I never saw him.” Some day  
‘ I hope to see Finedon and the place where he was  
‘ drowned too. Can you tell me where he was buried ?  
‘ —at Finedon, was it not ? If you have letters from  
‘ him will you let me see them some day ? ’

No one ever wrote words with more critical deliberation than Gerard Hopkins, and I am glad to have preserved the letter which he then wrote, having met Dolben but once, for it must give some idea of the grief which his more intimate friends suffered at his death ; some measure too of the shock to their hopes, since it records the full appreciation which his genius received from them during his life. This was, no doubt, chiefly due to the great charm of his personality, for his character was transparent ; nor did the strange spontaneous beauty and significance, that invested the actions of his life, desert him in the circumstances of his death. It was beautiful and strange that, after all his unceasing mental perplexity, he should die unconsciously,—for he must have fainted in the water,—without pain, in one of his rare moments of healthy bodily enjoyment : and premature as his end was, and the stroke of it unlooked for, and apparently sudden,

## *Memoir*

yet his last poems show him waiting and expectant, and his last action had all the dignity and fitness of artistic preparation.

My story of the accidents of his life can give no picture of his charm ; his perpetual humour and light merriment are what will least appear : though I may hope that the truthfulness of the story reveals more than I can myself perceive. As he went his way enthusiastically pursuing his imaginations, all intercourse with him was delightful, and all my remembrance of him is happy.

*Jan 1911.*

The second edition of this book enables me to correct a few misprints and errors in the Memoir, and to make additions to the notes. Shortly after the first publication I received a letter from Mr. W. B. Gamlen, of Exeter College, Secretary of the Oxford University Chest, giving his recollections of Dolben when he happened to meet him during his first pupillage at

## *Memoir*

South Luffenham in 1865. Since it carries the story on just beyond the date at which I ended, it will be in place here at the end. Mr. Gamlen wrote Nov. 16, 1911.

‘ I was a pupil for two months in the summer of  
‘ 1863 of C. E. Prichard at S. Luffenham rectory. At  
‘ Easter, 1865, being then an undergraduate, I returned  
‘ there on a visit. I find from notes I have preserved  
‘ that I was at S. Luffenham from 10 to 21 April in  
‘ that year.

‘ Dolben was then at the rectory, and as he was,  
‘ I believe, the only pupil, I naturally saw a good deal  
‘ of him. I soon discovered his mediæval tastes and  
‘ yearnings, which did not in the least commend them-  
‘ selves to me, and I daresay my lack of sympathy  
‘ became evident to him, but whether this was so or  
‘ not, it did not prevent our being very good friends.  
‘ I do not remember anything about his poetry, and  
‘ it is very likely I did not know that he had written  
‘ anything, but I can recall his distinguished appear-  
‘ ance, and the dreamy far-away look in his eyes. The  
‘ two photographs in your Memoir represent him as a  
‘ year or two younger than I recollect him.

‘ I left S. Luffenham under the impression that I had  
‘ been in constant contact during my stay there with



## *Memoir*

‘ a highly-cultivated intelligence, and one which it was  
‘ quite beyond my power rightly to appraise.

‘ Two and a half years later, in Michaelmas term  
‘ 1867, I met Prichard quite unexpectedly in Broad  
‘ Street ; and after exchanging greetings my first ques-  
‘ tion was, And how is Dolben ? He looked upon me  
‘ with an agonized expression,—I thought he was going  
‘ to faint,—and then with a gasp said, What, don’t  
‘ you know ? As soon as he had somewhat collected  
‘ himself he went on to tell me the story of Dolben’s  
‘ death, and of his own son’s narrow escape.

‘ The Welland scarcely deserves to be called a river.  
‘ My recollection is of a sluggish brook, which at the  
‘ place where we used to bathe expanded into a deep  
‘ pool which you could swim across in a few strokes.’

‘ C. E. Prichard had the “ whitest soul ” of any  
‘ man I have ever met. His feeble health probably  
‘ prevented his being very effective as a teacher, but  
‘ his conversation and letters were in the highest degree  
‘ inspiring and illuminating. If Dolben could have  
‘ spent two unbroken years under the influence you  
‘ suggest at p. lxxv<sup>1</sup> of your Memoir the result might  
‘ have been to lead him to look at matters ecclesiastical

<sup>1</sup> p. lxxix of this edition.

## *Memoir*

‘from the historical and philosophical as well as from  
‘the emotional point of view. But Prichard was so  
‘fond of him as he was, that he would probably have  
‘cared little to see him otherwise than as he had first  
‘known him.’

CHILSWELL, *June* 1914.

R. B.





DIGBY MACKWORTH DOLBEN

*From a photograph by Messrs. Hills & Saunders*

P O E M S



## POEMS

### I

#### HOMO FACTUS EST

COME to me, Belovèd,  
Babe of Bethlehem ;  
Lay aside Thy Sceptre  
And Thy Diadem.

COME to me, Belovèd ;  
Light and healing bring ;  
Hide my sin and sorrow  
Underneath Thy wing.

Bid all fear and doubting  
From my soul depart,  
As I feel the beating  
Of Thy Human Heart. ·

## *Poems*

Look upon me sweetly  
With Thy Human Eyes  
With Thy Human Finger  
Point me to the skies.

Safe from earthly scandal  
My poor spirit hide  
In the utter stillness  
Of Thy wounded Side.

Guide me, ever guide me,  
With Thy piercèd Hand,  
Till I reach the borders  
Of the pleasant land.

Then, my own Belovèd,  
Take me home to rest ;  
Whisper words of comfort ;  
Lay me on Thy Breast.

Show me not the Glory  
Round about Thy Throne ;  
Show me not the flashes  
Of Thy jewelled Crown.



## *Poems*

Hide me from the pity  
Of the Angels' Band,  
Who ever sing Thy praises,  
And before Thee stand.

Hide me from the glances  
Of the Seraphin,—  
They, so pure and spotless,  
I, so stained with sin.

Hide me from S. Michael  
With his flaming sword :—  
Thou can'st understand me,  
O my Human Lord !

JESU, my Belovèd,  
Come to me alone ;  
In Thy sweet embraces  
Make me all Thine own.

By the quiet waters,  
Sweetest JESU, lead ;  
'Mid the virgin lilies,  
Purest JESU, feed.

## *Poems*

Only Thee, Belovèd,

Only Thee, I seek.

Thou, the Man Christ JESUS,

Strength in flesh made weak.

# Poems

## 2

### FROM THE CLOISTER

*Brother Jerome seated in the cloister*

O to have wandered in the days that were,  
'Through the sweet groves of green Acadèmè—  
Or, shrouded in a night of olive boughs,  
Have watched their starry clusters overhead  
Twinkle and quiver in the perfumed breeze—  
That breeze which softly wafted from afar,  
Mingled with rustling leaves and fountain's splash,  
The boyish laughter and the pæan songs ;  
Or, couched among the beds of pale-pink thyme  
That fringe Cephissus with his purple pools,  
Have idly listened while low voices sang  
Of all those ancient victories of love,  
That never weary and that never die,—  
Of Sappho's leap, Leander's nightly swim,  
Of wandering Echo, and the Trojan maid  
For whom all ages shed their pitying tears ;—  
Or that fair legend, dearest of them all,

## Poems

That tells us how the hyacinth was born ;  
Or to have mingled in the eager crowd  
That questioning circled some philosopher,  
Young eyes that glistened and young cheeks that  
glowed

For love of Truth, the great, Indefinite—  
Truth beautiful as are the distant hills  
Veiled in soft purple, crags whereon is found  
No tender plant in the uncreviced rock,  
But clinging lichen, and black shrivelled moss ;—  
So should day pass, till, from the western skies,  
Behind the marble shrines and palaces,  
The big sun sunk, reddening the Aegean Sea.  
So should life pass, as flows the clear-brown stream  
And scarcely moves the water-lily's leaves.  
This sluggish life is like some dead canal,  
Dull, measured, muddy, washing flowerless banks.  
O sunny Athens, home of life and love,  
Free joyous life that I may never live,  
Warm glowing love that I may never know,—  
Home of Apollo, god of poetry.  
Dear bright-haired god, in whom I half believe,  
Come to me as thou cam'st to Semele,  
Trailing across the hills thy saffron robe,

## Poems

And catch me heavenward, wrapt in golden mists.  
I weary of this squalid holiness,  
I weary of these hot black draperies,  
I weary of the incense-thickened air,  
The chiming of the inevitable bells.  
My boyhood—hurried over, but once gone  
For ever mourned,—return for one short hour ;  
Friends of past days, light up these cloister walls  
With your bright presences and starry eyes,  
And make the cold grey vaulting ring again  
With tinkling laughter.—Ah ! they come, they come :  
I shut my eyes and fancy that I hear  
The sun-lit ripples kiss the willow-boughs. . . .  
So soon forgotten that all lovely things  
Which this vile earth affords—trees, mountains,  
streams,  
The regal faces, and the godlike eyes  
We see,—the tender voices that we hear,  
Are but mere shadows ?—the reality  
A cloud-veiled Face, a voice that 's lost in air,  
Or drowned in music more intelligible ?  
From every carven niche the stony Saints  
Stretch out their wasted hands in mute reproach,  
And from the Crucifix the great wan Christ

## Poems

Shows me His thorny Crown and gaping Wounds.  
Then hark ! I hear from many a lonely grave,  
From blood-stained sands of amphitheatres,  
From loathsome dungeon, and from blackened stake  
They cry, the Martyrs cry, ' Behold the MAN !'  
Is there no place in all the universe  
To hide me in ? no little island girt  
With waves, to drown the echo of that cry :  
' Behold the Man, the Man of Calvary !'

*Brother Francis, crossing the cloister, sings*

As pants the hart for forest-streams  
When wandering wearily  
Across the burning desert sand,  
So pant I, Lord, for Thee !  
Sweetest JESU ! Thou art He  
To whom my soul aspires ;  
Sweetest JESU, Thou art He,  
Whom my whole heart desires.  
To love Thee, Oh the ecstasy,  
The rapture, and the joy !  
All earthly loves shall pass away,  
All earthly pleasures cloy ;

## *Poems*

But whoso loves the Son of God

Of Love shall never tire ;

But through and through shall burn and glow

With Love's undying Fire.

*He enters the chapel.*

# Poems

## 3

### AMOREM SENSUS

#### *Translation*

AUTHOR of pardon, JESU Christ,  
Extend Thy love to us, and deign  
To show Thy mercy upon us,  
And cleanse our hearts from every stain.

Most tender and most gracious Lord,  
Thou knowest whereof man is made ;  
Thou knowest whereunto he falls,  
If Thou withdraw Thy saving aid.

My every thought to Thee is clear,  
My inmost soul unveiled to Thee ;—  
Disperse and drive away the dreams  
Of worldliness and vanity.

We wander exiled here below,  
Through this sad vale of sin and strife ;  
O lead us to the Holy Mount,  
The home of everlasting Life.



## *Poems*

Thou Who for us becamest poor,  
Thou Who for us wast crucified,  
Wash out the past in that dear Stream  
That floweth from Thy piercèd Side.

Thrice blessed Love that satisfies  
Its thirst in Thee, O Fount of Grace :  
Thrice blessed eyes that through all time  
Shall see Thy Glory face to face.

Thy Glory, Lord, surpasses thought,  
And yet Thy Love is infinite ;—  
That Love to taste, that Glory see,  
My heart to Thee has winged her flight.

# Poems

## 4

*Sis licet felix ubicunque mavis*

*Et memor nostri . . . vivas*

ON river banks my love was born,  
And cradled 'neath a budding thorn,  
Whose flowers never more shall kiss  
Lips half so sweet and red as his.  
Beneath him lily-islands spread  
With broad cool leaves a floating bed :  
Around, to meet his opening eyes,  
The ripples danced in glad surprise.  
I found him there when spring was new,  
When winds were soft and skies were blue ;  
I marvelled not, although he drew  
My whole soul to him, for I knew  
That he was born to be my king,  
And I was only born to sing  
With faded lips and feeble lays  
His love and beauty all my days.  
Therefore I pushed the flowers aside  
And humbly knelt me by his side,

## Poems

And then I stooped, and whispered—‘ Come,  
‘ O Long-desired, to your Home ;  
‘ How much desired none can know,  
‘ But those who wander to and fro  
‘ Through unknown groups and careless faces,  
‘ And seek in vain for friendship’s graces,  
‘ Until the earth’s rich beauties seem  
‘ The bitter mockery of a dream :  
‘ Nor shall they wake, nor shall they see  
‘ This life’s most sweet reality,  
‘ Until before them there arise  
‘ A loving, answering pair of eyes.—  
‘ So had I wandered, till you came ;  
‘ Spring, summer, autumn were the same ;  
‘ For winter ever held the skies  
‘ Clouded with earth’s sad mysteries ;  
‘ And on my heart the chilly hand  
‘ Of grief I could not understand.  
‘ Those looks, those words of scorn I felt,—  
‘ Never was frost so hard to melt :—  
‘ Yet, as from gardens far below,  
‘ Sweet breezes through a sick room blow,  
‘ So from the Future that should be,  
‘ Faint hopes were always wafted me ;

## Poems

‘ Till all my heart and soul were full

‘ Of longing undefinable.

‘ You came—you came.

    ‘ No lilies can I offer you,

‘ Nor gentian, nor violets blue :

‘ The only flower that I own

‘ Is, was and shall be, yours alone,—

‘ A flower of such a glowing red

‘ It seems as if each leaf had bled.’

    He took my flower ; I saw it pressed

With loving care against his breast.

But on that robe it left a stain,

Which never shall come out again.

He heeded not, but clasped my hand

And led me through enchanted land.

On we went—the flowers springing,

Turtle-voices ever singing ;

On we went—I understood

Lake and mountain, rock and wood,

Hidden meanings, hidden duties,

Hidden loves, and hidden beauties ;

On we went—the ceaseless chorus

Of all nature chanted o’er us ;

On we went—the scented breeze

## Poems

From the bright Hesperian seas  
Striking ever on our faces,  
Bringing from those blessed places  
A foretaste of the spirit's rest  
Among the Islands of the blest ;  
Till the griefs of life's old story  
Faded in a mist of glory.  
Came there with that glorious vision  
Throbbing notes of songs Elysian,  
Echoing now as deep and loud  
As the thunder in the cloud ;  
Then again the music sank  
Soft as ripples on the bank ;  
And the angels, as they passed,  
Whispered to me ' Loved at last.'

Gone—gone—O never nevermore,  
Standing upon the willowy shore,  
Shall it be mine to watch his face  
Uplifted westward, all ablaze  
With sunset glory, and his eyes  
Catching the splendour of the skies,  
Then softly downward turned on mine,  
As stars in turbid waters shine.

## *Poems*

I cannot think, I cannot weep,—  
But as one walking in his sleep,  
I wander back through well-known ways,  
As once with him through summer days.  
Again I see the rushes shiver,  
And lines on dying sunlight quiver  
Across the waters cold and brown,  
O'er which our boat glides slowly down.  
Again, again I see him stand  
With red June roses in his hand ;  
Again, again within those walls  
We loved so well, the sunlight falls  
From blazoned windows on his head,  
In streams of purple and of red.  
Gone—gone.—

So take my flowers, dear river Thames,  
And snap, oh snap the lily stems.  
I throw my heart among those flowers  
You gave to me in boyish hours :  
Spare it and them nor storm nor mire ;  
But sink them lower, toss them higher,  
I care not,—for I know that pain  
Alone can purify their stain.  
So only, only may I win

## *Poems*

Some pardon for my youthful sin,—  
Vain hopes, false peace, untrustful fears,  
Three wasted, dreamy, happy years ;—  
So only may I stand with him,  
When suns have sunk and moons grown dim,  
And see him shining in the light  
Of the new Heaven's sunless white.

---

Belovèd, take my little song :  
The river, as he rolls along,  
Will sing it clearer far than I ;  
And possibly your memory,  
When looking back on what has been,  
Will tell you what these verses mean.

5

A SEA SONG

IN the days before the high tide  
Swept away the towers of sand  
Built with so much care and labour  
By the children of the land,

Pale, upon the pallid beaches,  
Thirsting, on the thirsty sands,  
Ever cried I to the Distance,  
Ever seaward spread my hands.

See, they come, they come, the ripples,  
Singing, singing fast and low,  
Meet the longing of the sea-shores,  
Clasp them, kiss them once, and go.

‘ Stay, sweet Ocean, satisfying  
All desires into rest—’  
Not a word the Ocean answered,  
Rolling sunward down the west.



## *Poems*

Then I wept : ‘ Oh, who will give me  
To behold the stable sea,  
On whose tideless shores for ever  
Sounds of many waters be ? ’

# *Poems*

## 6

### GOOD NIGHT

THE sun has set.  
The western light  
And after that  
The starlit night  
Still tell of Him,  
Who far away,  
Is Lord of night  
As well as day.  
Now do you wonder,  
Dear, that I  
Wished you ' Good night '   
And not ' Good-bye ' ?

7

A POEM WITHOUT A NAME

I

SURELY before the time my Sun has set :  
The evening had not come, it was but noon,  
The gladness passed from all my Pleasant Land ;  
And, through the night that knows nor star nor moon,  
Among clean souls who all but Heaven forget,  
Alone remembering I wander on.  
They sing of triumph, and a Mighty Hand  
Locked fast in theirs through sorrow's Mystery ;  
They sing of glimpses of another Land,  
Whose purples gleam through all their agony.  
But I—I did not choose like them, I chose  
The summer roses, and the red, red wine,  
The juice of earth's wild grapes, to drink with those  
Whose glories yet thro' saddest memories shine.  
I will not tell of them, of him who came ;  
I will not tell you what men call my land.  
They speak half-choked in fogs of scorn and sin.

## Poems

I turn from all their pitiless human din  
To voices that can feel and understand.

O ever-laughing rivers, sing his name  
To all your lilies ;—tell it out, O chime,  
In hourly four-fold voices ;—western breeze  
Among the avenues of scented lime  
Murmur it softly to the summer night ;—  
O sunlight, water, music, flowers and trees,  
Heart-beats of nature's infinite delight,  
Love him for ever, all things beautiful !  
A little while it was he stayed with me,  
And taught me knowledge sweet and wonderful,  
And satisfied my soul with poetry :  
But soon, too soon, there sounded from above  
Innumerable clapping of white hands,  
And countless laughing voices sang of love,  
And called my friend away to other lands.  
Well—I am very glad they were so fair,  
For whom the lightening east and morning skies ;  
For me the sunset of his golden hair,  
Fading among the hills of Paradise.

Weed-grown is all my garden of delight ;—  
Most tired, most cold without the Eden-gate,  
With eyes still good for ache, tho' not for sight,

## *Poems*

Among the briers and thorns I weep and wait.  
Now first I catch the meaning of a strife,  
A great soul-battle fought for death or life.  
Nearing me come the rumours of a war,  
And blood and dust sweep cloudy from afar,  
And, surging round, the sobbing of the sea  
Choked with the weepings of humanity.

Alas ! no armour have I fashioned me,  
And, having lived on honey in the past,  
Have gained no strength. From the unfathomed sea  
I draw no food, for all the nets I cast.  
I am not strong enough to fight beneath,  
I am not clean enough to mount above ;  
Oh let me dream, although to dream is death,  
Beside the hills where last I saw my Love.

IN THE GARDEN

THERE is a garden, which I think He loves  
Who loveth all things fair ;  
And once the Master of the flowers came  
To teach love-lessons there.

He touched my eyes, and in the open sun  
They walked, the Holy Dead,  
Trailing their washen robes across the turf,  
An aureole round each head.

One said, with wisdom in his infant eyes,—  
‘ The world I never knew ;  
But, love the Holy Child of Bethlehem,  
And He will love you too.’

One said—‘ The victory is hard to win,  
‘ But love shall conquer death.  
‘ The world is sweet, but He is sweeter far,  
‘ The Boy of Nazareth.’

## Poems

One said—‘ My life was twilight from the first ;

‘ But on my Calvary,

‘ Beside my cross, another Cross was raised

‘ In utter love for me.’

One said—‘ The wine-vat it was hard to tread,

‘ It stained my weary feet ;

‘ But One from Bozra trod with me in love,

‘ And made my vintage sweet.’

One said—‘ My human loves were pure and fair,

‘ He would not have them cease ;

‘ But, knit to His, I bore them in my heart

‘ Into the land of peace.’

One came, who in the groves of Paradise

Had latest cut his palm ;

He only said—‘ The floods lift up their voice,

‘ But love can make them calm.’

I heard a step—I had been long alone,

I thought they might have missed me—

It was my mother coming o’er the grass ;

I turned—and so she kissed me.

AFTER READING AESCHYLUS

I WILL not sing my little puny songs.  
It is more blessed for the rippling pool  
To be absorbed in the great ocean-wave  
Than even to kiss the sea-weeds on its breast.  
Therefore in passiveness I will lie still,  
And let the multitudinous music of the Greek  
Pass into me, till I am musical,



AFTER READING HOMER

HAPPY the man, who on the mountain-side  
Bending o'er fern and flowers his basket fills :  
Yet he will never know the outline-power,  
The awful Whole of the Eternal Hills.

So some there are, who never feel the strength  
In thy blind eyes, majestic and complete,  
Which conquers those, who motionlessly sit,  
O dear divine old Giant, at thy feet.

# Poems

## I I

THERE was one who walked in shadow,  
There was one who walked in light :  
But once their way together lay,  
Where sun and shade unite,

In the meadow of the lotus,  
In the meadow of the rose,  
Where fair with youth and clear with truth  
The Living River flows.

Scarcely summer stillness breaking,  
Questions, answers, soft and low—  
The words they said, the vows they made,  
None but the willows know.

Both have passed away for ever  
From the meadow and the stream ;  
Past their waking, past their breaking  
The sweetness of that dream.

One along the dusty highway  
Toiling counts the weary hours,

## *Poems*

And one among its shining throng  
The world has crowned with flowers.

Sometimes perhaps amid the gardens,  
Where the noble have their part,  
Though noon 's o'erhead, a dew-drop 's shed  
Into a lily's heart.

This I know, till one heart reaches  
Labour's sum, the restful grave,  
Will still be seen the willow-green,  
And heard the rippling wave.

# Poems

## I 2

*What is good for a bootless bene ?*

*The Falconer to the lady said.*

FROM the great Poet's lips I thought to take  
Some drops of honey for my parchèd mouth,  
And draw from out his depths of purple lake  
Some rill to murmur Peace thro' summer drouth.

Hail, sweet sad story ! Noble lady, hail !—  
Who, sorrowing wisely, sorrowed not in vain,  
When Love and Death did strive, but Love prevail  
To turn thy loss to Everlasting gain.

But what of Love, whose crown is not of bay,  
Whose yellow locks with asphodel are twined ?  
And what of him, who in the battle-day  
Dare not look forward, for the foes behind ?

GOOD FRIDAY

WAS it a dream—the outline of that Face,  
Which seemed to lighten from the Holy Place,  
Meeting all want, fulfilling all desire ?  
A dream—the music of that Voice most sweet,  
Which seemed to rise above the chanting choir ?  
A dream—the treadings of those wounded Feet,  
Pacing about the Altar still and slow ?  
Illusion—all I thought to love and know ?

Strong Sorrow-wrestler of Mount Calvary,  
Speak through the blackness of Thine Agony,  
Say, have I ever known Thee ? answer me !  
Speak, Merciful and Mighty, lifted up  
To draw those to Thee who have power to will  
The roseate Baptism, and the bitter Cup,  
The Royal Graces of the Cross-crowned Hill.

Terrible Golgotha—among the bones  
Which whiten thee, as thick as splintered stones  
Where headlong rocks have crushed themselves away,  
I stumble on—Is it too dark to pray ?

ANACREONTIC

ON the tender myrtle-branches,  
In the meadow lotus-grassèd,  
While the wearied sunlight softly  
To the Happy Islands passèd,—  
Reddest lips the reddest vintage  
Of the bright Aegean quaffing,  
There I saw them lie, the evening  
Hazes rippled with their laughing.  
Round them boys, with hair as golden  
As Queen Cytheréa's own is,  
Sang to lyres wreathed with ivy  
Of the beautiful Adonis—  
(Of Adonis the Desired,  
He has perished on the mountain,)  
While their voices, rising, falling,  
As the murmur of a fountain,  
Glittered upwards at the mention  
Of his beauty unavailing ;  
Scattered into rainbowed teardrops  
To the *ai ai* of the wailing.

# Poems

## 15

Ἔρως ἰμερός τε.

I SAID to my heart,—‘ I am tired,  
Am tired of loving in vain ;  
Since the beauty of the Desired  
Shall not be unveiled again.’

So we laid our Longing to rest,  
To sleep through the endless hours,  
And called to a breeze of the west  
To kiss the acacia flowers ;

To kiss them until they break  
And hide him beneath their bloom,  
That our Longing for Love’s sweet sake  
Be shrouded fair in the tomb.

But the Memories arose in light,  
From meadow and wharf and wave,  
And sang through the gathering night,  
As we turned to leave the grave.

## *Poems*

Of Longing they sang, son of Love,  
Love patient as earth beneath,  
As the heavens immortal above,  
And mightier than time or death.

They sang till they woke him at morn ;  
Arisen he stood by my bed,  
In his face the glory of dawn,  
The gold and purple and red.

He is mine thro' the depth of pain,  
Is mine through the length of ways ;  
But a death awaits him again,  
In the Triumph of Patient Days.



16

STRANGE, all-absorbing Love, who gatherest  
Unto Thy glowing all my pleasant dew,  
Then delicately my garden waterest,  
Drawing the old, to pour it back anew :

In the dim glitter of the dawning hours  
' Not so,' I said, ' but still these drops of light,  
' Heart-shrined among the petals of my flowers,  
' Shall hold the memory of the starry night

' So fresh, no need of showers shall there be.'—  
Ah, senseless gardener ! must it come to pass  
That 'neath the glaring noon thou shouldest see  
Thine earth become as iron, His heavens as brass ?

Nay rather, O my Sun, I will be wise,  
Believe in Love which may not yet be seen,  
Yield Thee my earth-drops, call Thee from the skies,  
In soft return, to keep my bedding green.

## *Poems*

So when the bells at Vesper-tide shall sound,  
And the dead ocean o'er my garden flows,  
Upon the Golden Altar may be found  
Some scarlet berries and a Christmas rose.

17

FROM SAPPHO

THOU liest dead,—lie on : of thee  
No sweet remembrances shall be,  
Who never plucked Pierian rose,  
Who never chanced on Anterôs.  
Unknown, unnoticed, there below  
Through Aides' houses shalt thou go  
Alone,—for never a flitting ghost  
Shall find in thee a lover lost.

# Poems

## 18

*Osculo oris sui osculetur me.*

CHRIST, for whose only Love I keep me clean  
Among the palaces of Babylon,  
I would not 'Thou should'st reckon me with them  
Who miserly would count each golden stone  
That flags the street of Thy Jerusalem—  
Who, having touched and tasted, heard and seen,

Half-drunken yet from earthly revelries,  
Would wipe with flower-wreathed hair Thy bleeding  
Feet,  
Jostling about Thee but to stay the heat  
Of pale parched lips in Thy cool chalices.

'Our cups are emptiness—how long? how long  
'Before that 'Thou wilt pour us of Thy wine,  
'Thy sweet new wine, that we may thirst no more?  
'Our lamps are darkness,—open day of Thine,  
'Surely is light to spare behind that door,  
'Where God is Sun, and Saints a starry throng.'

## Poems

But I, how little profit were to me  
Tho' mine the twelve foundations of the skies,  
With this green world of love an age below :—  
The soft remembrance of those human eyes  
Would pale the everlasting jewel-glow ;  
And o'er the perfect passionless minstrelsy

A voice would sound the decachords above,  
Deadenning the music of the Living Land—  
Thou madest, Thou knowest, Thou wilt understand,  
And stay me with the Apples of Thy love.

My Christ, remember that betrothal day ;  
*Blessed be He that cometh* was the song :  
Glad as the Hebrew boys who cried Hosanna,  
O'er hearts thick-strewn as palms they passed along,  
To reap in might the fields of heavenly manna—  
These were the bridesmen in their white array.

Soon hearts and eyes were lifted up to Thee :  
Deep in dim glories of the Sanctuary,  
Between the thunderous Alleluia-praise,  
Through incense-hazes that encompassed Thee,  
I saw the priestly hands Thyself upraise—  
Heaven sank to earth—earth leapt to heaven for me.

## *Poems*

Rise, Peter, rise ; He standeth on the shore,  
The thrice-denied of Pilate's Judgement Hall :  
His hand is o'er the shingle lest thou fall ;  
He wipes thy bitter tears for evermore.

' Lovest thou ? ' My belovèd, answer me,  
Of Thine all-knowledge show me only this—  
Tarrieth the answer ? Lo, the House of Bread ;  
Lo, God and man made one in Mary's kiss  
Bending in rapture o'er the manger bed.  
I with the holy kings will go and see.

ON THE PICTURE OF AN ANGEL BY  
FRA ANGELICO

PRESS each on each, sweet wings, and roof me in  
Some closèd cell to hold my weariness,  
Desired—as from unshadowed plains to win  
The palmy gloaming of the oases :

Glad wings, that floated ere the suns arose  
Down pillared lines of ever-fruited trees,  
Where thro' the many-gladed leafage flows  
The uncreated noon of Paradise :

Soft wings, in contemplation ottentime  
Stretched on the ocean-depths that drown desire,  
Where lightening tides in never-falling chime  
Ring round the angel isles in glass and fire :

From meadow-lands that sleep beyond the stars,  
From liliated woods and waves the blessed see,  
Pass, bird of God, ah pass the golden bars,  
And in thy fair compassion pity me.

## Poems

O for the garden city of the Flower,  
Of jewelled Italy the chosen gem,  
Where angels and Giotto dreamed a tower  
In beauty as of New Jerusalem :

For there, when roseate as a wingèd cloud  
Upon the saffron of the paling east—  
A glowing pillar in the House of God—  
That tower was born, the Very Loveliest,

Then shaking wings, and voices then that sang,  
Passed up and down the chasèd jasper wall,  
And through the crystal trceries outrang,  
As when from deep to deep the seraphs call.

O for the valley slopes which Arno cleaves  
With arrowy heads of gold 'unceasingly,  
Parting the twilight of the grey-green leaves  
As shafted sungleam on a rain-cloud sky :

For there, more white than mists of bloom above  
When sunset kindles Luni's vineyard height,  
Strange Presences have paced the olive grove,  
And dazed the cypress cloister into light.



## *Poems*

But not for me the angel-haunted South :

I spread my hands across the unlovely plain,  
I faint for beauty in the daily drouth  
Of beauty, as the fields for August rain.

Yet hope is mine against some Eastern dawn,  
Not in a vision but reality,  
To see thy wings, and in thine arms upborne,  
To rest me in a fairer Italy.

# Poems

20

## REQUESTS

I ASKED for Peace—

My sins arose,

And bound me close,

I could not find release.

I asked for Truth—

My doubts came in,

And with their din

They wearied all my youth.

I asked for Love—

My lovers failed,

And griefs assailed

Around, beneath, above.

I asked for Thee—

And Thou didst come

To take me home

Within Thy Heart to be.

# Poems

## 21

BEAUTIFUL, oh beautiful—

In all the mountain passes  
The plenteous dowers of April showers,  
Which every spring amasses,  
To bring about thro' summer drought  
The blossoming of the grasses.

Beautiful, oh beautiful—

The April of the ages,  
Which sweetly brought its showers of thought  
To poets and to sages,  
Now stored away our thirst to stay  
In ever-dewy pages.

THE ETERNAL CALVARY

*The clouded hill attend thou still,  
And him that went within.*

A. CLOUGH.

Nor so indeed shall be our creed,—  
The Man whom we rely on  
Has brought us thro' from old to new,  
From Sinai to Zion.  
For us He scaled the hill of myrrh,  
The summits of His Passion,  
And is set down upon the throne  
Of infinite Compassion.

He passed within the cloud that veiled  
The Mount of our Salvation,  
In utter darkness swallowed up  
Until the Consummation.

## Poems

The clouds are burst, the shades dispersed ;  
    Descending from above  
With wounded hands our Prophet stands,  
    And bears the Law of Love.

Receive it then, believe it then,  
    As childlike spirits can ;  
Receive, believe, and thou shalt live,  
    And thou shalt LOVE, O man !

Not so indeed shall be our creed,—  
    To wait a new commission,  
As if again revealed to men  
    Could be the heavenly Vision ;  
The priceless thing He died to bring  
    From out the veil, to miss,  
While Host and Cup are lifted up  
    On countless Calvarys.

‘ Among the dead,’ an angel said,  
    ‘ Seek not the living Christ.’  
The type is done, the real begun,  
    Behold the Eucharist !  
The curse is spent, the veil is rent,  
    And face to face we meet Him,

## *Poems*

With chanting choirs and incense fires  
On every altar greet Him.

Receive it then, believe it then,  
As childlike spirits can ;  
Receive, believe, and thou shalt live,  
And thou shalt LOVE, O man !

23

WE hurry on, nor passing note  
The rounded hedges white with May ;  
For golden clouds before us float  
To lead our dazzled sight astray.  
We say, ' they shall indeed be sweet  
' The summer days that are to be '—  
The ages murmur at our feet  
The everlasting mystery.

We seek for Love to make our own,  
But clasp him not for all our care  
Of outspread arms ; we gain alone  
The flicker of his yellow hair  
Caught now and then through glancing vine,  
How rare, how fair, we dare not tell ;  
We know those sunny locks entwine  
With ruddy-fruited asphodel.

## *Poems*

A little life, a little love,  
Young men rejoicing in their youth,  
A doubtful twilight from above,  
A glimpse of Beauty and of Truth,—  
And then, no doubt, spring-loveliness  
Expressed in hawthorns white and red,  
The sprouting of the meadow grass,  
But churchyard weeds about our head.



24

THE PILGRIM AND THE KNIGHT

HERE in the flats that encompass the hills called Beautiful, lying,

O Beloved, behold a Pilgrim who fain would be sleeping,  
Did not at times the snows that diadem summits above  
him

Break on his dreams, and scatter the slumberous mists  
from his eyelids,

Flashing the consciousness back, by weariness half over-  
powered,

Of journeying unfulfilled and feet that have toiled but  
attained not.

Then, in a sudden trance, (as the man whose eyes were  
opened

But for a little while, then closed to night everlasting,)  
High on the slopes of the terraced hills a goodly pro-  
cession :

## Poems

White are the horses and white are the plumes and  
white are the vestures,

White is the heaven above with pearls that the dawning  
is scattering,

White beneath the flowerless fields that are hedged  
with the snowdrift.

These are the Knights of the Lord, who fight with the  
Beast and the Prophet.

Ho for the Knight that rides in the splendour of  
opening manhood,

Calm as Michael, when, out from the Beatifical Vision,  
Bearing the might of the Lord, he passed to conquer  
the Dragon.

Yet, in those passionless eyes, if hitherward turned for  
a moment,

Might not some memory waken of him whom he loved  
in the Distance,

Ere from Holy Land the voice of the trumpet had  
sounded—

‘O Beloved’—Enough; the words unechoed, un-  
answered,

Fade with the vision away on the slopes of the Beauti-  
ful Mountains.

## *Poems*

Yet—remember me, Thou Captain of Israel's Knight-  
hood,  
Thou to John made known in the Revelation of  
Patmos.

# Poems

25

## BREVI TEMPORE MAGNUM PERFECIT OPUS

I

'Twas not in shady cloister that God set His chosen one,  
But in the van of battle and the streets of Babylon :  
There he in patience served the days of his captivity,  
Until the King made known to him the City of the  
Free.

There One who watched in Salem once beside the  
Treasury,  
And reckoned up the riches of the widow's penury,  
Received the offering of him who counted not the cost,  
But burnt his soul and body in a living holocaust.

His life was in the Sanctuary and like a fountain sealed ;  
He to the Master's eyes alone its height and depth  
revealed ;

Of that which every motion spoke he seldom told in  
word,

But on his face was written up the secret of the Lord.

## Poems

Through many fiery places in innocence he trod ;  
We almost saw beside him one like the Son of God :  
Where'er he went a perfume about his presence hung,  
As tho' within that shrine of flesh a mystic censer  
swung.

We never heard him laugh aloud, we know he often  
wept :  
We think the Bridegroom sometimes stood beside him  
as he slept,  
And set upon those virgin lips the signet of His love,  
That any other touch but His they never should  
approve.

He grew in grace and stature, he felt and understood  
The stirring of the passions and the movement of the  
blood,  
And clung with deepening tenderness about the  
wounded Feet,  
And nestled in the Master's Breast with rapture new  
and sweet.

He stayed till seventeen Aprils here had budded into  
May,  
Along the pleasant hedgerows that he knew not far  
away :

## Poems

But scarcely seventeen summers yet the lily-beds had  
    blown,  
Before the angels carried him to gardens of their own.

### II

They set the window open as the sun was going down :  
Beneath went on the hurry and roar of London town.  
But in the narrow room above the rush of life was done,  
In silence, once for ever, the victory was won.

He came, the Strong, the Terrible, whose face the  
    strongest fear,  
(O world, behold thy Spoiler spoiled, the Stronger  
    Man is here)

He came, the Loved, the Loveliest, whose Face the  
    Saints desire,  
To be his Fellow-pilgrim thro' the water and the fire.

Henceforth no more beneath the veils, Viaticum no  
    more,

But Rest and Consummation upon the other Shore.  
The bell was ringing Complin, the night began to fall ;  
They laid him in the ashes and waited for the call.

## *Poems*

‘Come up, come up from Lebanon,’ he heard the  
Bridegroom say,

‘Come up, my Love, my sister, for the shadows flee  
away.’

And as upon his face they caught the breaking of that  
morn

They spread his arms to fashion the Cross that he had  
borne

A smile, a whispered ‘JESUS’, then the fulness of the  
day :

Made perfect in a little while his spirit passed away ;  
And leaning on the Bridegroom’s arm he scaled the  
golden stair

Through all the baffled legions of the powers of the air

Beneath the secret Altar now he tarrieth the End.

From earth he hears the pleadings of holy Mass ascend,  
From heaven the voice of JESUS, Who bids the angels  
haste

To gather in the chosen to the Marriage and the Feast.

## *Poems*

26

### A PRAYER

FROM falsehood and error,  
From darkness and terror,  
From all that is evil,  
From the power of the devil,  
From the fire and the doom,  
From the judgement to come—  
Sweet JESU, deliver  
Thy servants for ever.



# Poems

27

## THE LILY

ONCE, on the river banks we knew,  
A child, who laughing ran to choose  
A lily there, essayed to tread  
The lawn of leaves that outward spread  
To where the very fairest blew,  
And slipped from love and life and light,  
Into the shiny depth beneath;  
While through the tangle and the ooze  
Up bubbled all his little breath.

Above, the lilies calmly white  
Were floating still at eventide,  
When, as it chanced, a boat went down  
Returning to the royal town,  
Wherein a noble lady lay  
Among the cushions dreamily,  
Who leant above the gilded side  
And plucked the flower carelessly,  
And wore it at the ball that night.

A LETTER

MY Love, and once again my Love,  
And then no more until the end,  
Until the waters cease to move,  
Until we rest within the Ark,  
And all is light which now is dark,  
And loves can never more descend.  
And yet—and yet be just to me  
At least for manhood ; for the whole  
Love-current of a human soul,  
Though bent and rolled through fruitless ways,  
Tho' marred with slime and choked with weed,  
(Long lost the silver ripple-song,  
Long past the sprouting water-mead,)  
Is something awful, broad and strong.  
Remember that this utterly,  
With all its waves of passion, set  
To you ; that all the water store,  
No second April shall restore,

## Poems

Was so to broken cisterns poured,  
And lost, or else long since had met  
The ocean-love of Christ the Lord.  
My Brother, hear me ; for the Name  
Which is as fire in my bones  
Has burned away the former shame ;  
Held I my peace, the very stones  
Would cry against me ; hear me then,  
Who will not bid you hear again.  
Hear what I saw, and why I fled,  
And how I lost and how I won,  
I, who between the quick and dead,  
Once chose corruption for my own.

I saw, where heaven's arches meet,  
One stand in awfulness alone,  
With folded robe and gleaming feet  
And eyes that looked not up nor down.  
It was the archangel, drawing breath  
To blow for life, to blow for death.  
The glow and soft reality  
Of love and life grew cold and grey,  
And died before the Eternity  
That compasseth the Judgement day.  
I said, ' My sin is full and ended ' ;

## Poems

While down the garden that we tended,  
As in a heavy dream, I turned  
Thro' liliated glades that once were sweet,  
Trampling the buds that kissed my feet,  
Until the sword above me burned.  
My hair was shrivelled to my head,  
My heart as ashes scorched, and dead  
As his who ere its beating died.  
The life imprisoned in my brain  
Burst to my eyes in throbs of pain,  
And all their tender springs were dried.  
For miles and miles the wilds I trod,  
Drunk with the angry wine of God ;  
Until the nets of anguish broke,  
Until the prisoner found release.

I mused awhile in quietness  
Upon that strangest liberty :  
Then other fires intolerably  
Were kindled in me—and I spoke ;  
And so attained the hidden Peace,  
The land of Wells beyond the fire,  
The Face of loveliness unmarred,  
The Consummation of desire.

O vesper-light ! O night thick-starred !

## *Poems*

O five-fold springs, that upward burst  
And radiate from Calvary  
To stay the weary nations' thirst,  
And hide a world's impurity !—  
How one drew near with soiled feet,  
Through all the Marah overflow,  
And how the waters were made sweet  
That night Thou knowest,—only Thou.

Repent with me, for judgement waits.  
Repent with me, for JESUS hung  
Three hours upon the nails for you.  
Rise, bid the angels sing anew  
At every one of Sion's gates  
The song which then for me they sung.

THE ANNUNCIATION

ON the silent ages breaking  
Comes the sweet Annunciation :  
The eternal Ave waking,  
Changes Eva's condemnation.

How at Nazareth the Archangel  
Hailed the dear predestined maiden  
Read from out the Great Evangel  
We, the sin and sorrow-laden.

For to-day the Church rejoices  
In the angelic salutation,  
And to-day ten thousand voices  
Hail the Mother of salvation.

Hail, amid the shades descending  
Round our humble oratory !  
Hail, amid the light unending  
Of the beatific Glory !

## *Poems*

Hail, in city Galilean

To the maid of lowly station !

Hail, in city empyrean

To the Queen of all creation !

Hail, O Mother of compassion !

Hail, O Mother of fair love !

Hail, our Lady of the Passion !

Hail beneath and hail above !

Where she stands, our mother Mary,

In her human majesty,

Nearest to the sanctuary

Of the awful Trinity.

May she prove once more a Mother,

Plead that He, her dearest Son,

Who through her became our Brother,

Would His sinful brethren own.

With the Father and the Spirit,

Son of Mary, Thee we praise ;

By Thine INCARNATION's merit

Turn on us a Brother's face !

Amen.

SISTER DEATH

MY sister Death ! I pray thee come to me  
Of thy sweet charity,  
And be my nurse but for a little while ;  
I will indeed lie still,  
And not detain thee long, when once is spread,  
Beneath the yew, my bed :  
I will not ask for lilies or for roses ;  
But when the evening closes,  
Just take from any brook a single knot  
Of pale Forget-me-not,  
And lay them in my hand, until I wake,  
For his dear sake ;  
(For should he ever pass and by me stand,  
He yet might understand—)  
Then heal the passion and the fever  
With one cool kiss, for ever.



31

CAVE OF SOMNUS

*Translation*

NEAR the Cimmerian land, deep-caverned, lies  
A hollow mount, the home of sluggish Sleep ;  
Where never ray from morn or evening skies  
Can enter, but where blackening vapours creep,  
And doubtful gloom unbroken sway doth keep.

There never crested bird evokes the dawn,  
Nor watchful dogs disturb the silence deep,  
Nor wandering beast, nor forest tempest-torn,  
Nor harsher sound of human passions born.

Mute quiet reigns ;—but from the lowest cave  
A spring Lethean rising evermore  
Pours through the murmuring rocks a slumberous  
wave.

The plenteous poppy blossoms at the door,  
And countless herbs, of night the drowsy store.

DIANAE MUNUSCULUM

*After Catullus*

HEAR the choir of boy and maid,  
Mighty child of mightiest Jove,  
Thou whom royal mother laid  
In the Delian olive grove—

That thou mightest be the lady  
Of all woods that bud in spring,  
Of all glades remote and shady,  
Of all rivers echoing.

Thou wert cradled 'mid the seas,  
Guarded was thine infant state  
With the glistening Cyclades,  
With the wave inviolate—

That thou mightest be the warden  
Of all holy loves and pure,  
When, as in a fenced garden,  
Chaste affections bloom secure.

## *Poems*

Hear the choir of boy and maid,  
Mighty child of mightiest Jove :  
Take the wreath before thee laid,  
Take the incense of our love.

# Poems

## 33

### ANACREONTIC

#### *Translation*

DRINK, in the glory of youth ;  
    love, crowned with roses of summer :  
So be it only with me  
    be mad, be wise as thou listest.

## 34

### FROM MARTIAL

#### *Translation*

IN vain you count his virtues up,  
    His soberness commend ;  
I like a steady servant,  
    But not a steady friend.

35

POPPIES

LILIES, lilies not for me,  
Flowers of the pure and saintly—  
I have seen in holy places  
Where the incense rises faintly,  
And the priest the chalice raises,  
Lilies in the altar vases,  
Not for me.

Leave untouched each garden tree,  
Kings and queens of flower-land.  
When the summer evening closes,  
Lovers may-be hand in hand  
There will seek for crimson roses,  
There will bind their wreaths and posies  
Merrily.

From the corn-fields where we met  
Pluck me poppies white and red ;

## *Poems*

Bind them round my weary brain,  
Strew them on my narrow bed,  
Numbing all the ache and pain.—  
I shall sleep nor wake again,  
But forget.

36

BEYOND

BEYOND the calumny and wrong,  
Beyond the clamour and the throng,  
Beyond the praise and triumph-song

He passed.

Beyond the scandal and the doubt,  
The fear within, the fight without,  
The turmoil and the battle-shout

He sleeps.

The world for him was not so sweet  
That he should grieve to stay his feet  
Where youth and manhood's highways meet,  
And die.

For every child a mother's breast,  
For every bird a guarded nest ;  
For him alone was found no rest  
But this.

## *Poems*

Beneath the flight of happy hours,  
Beneath the withering of the flowers  
In folds of peace more sure than ours  
He lies.

A night no glaring dawn shall break,  
A sleep no cruel voice shall wake,  
An heritage that none can take  
Are his.



I SAID—‘ ’Tis very late we meet ;  
‘ A guest long since has filled each seat  
    ‘ About my hearth ; yet rest  
‘ A little while beside the door ;  
‘ Although the east shall glow no more,  
    ‘ Some light is in the west,  
‘ And gathers round the wayside inn,  
‘ Whence all the mountain paths begin :  
    ‘ Pause, ere you onward go,  
‘ And sing, while gazing up the height,  
‘ The guarded valley of delight  
    ‘ We both have left below.’

Was it not somewhat thus, my friend ?—  
But now your rest has reached its end,  
    And upwards you must strive.  
Ah now I thank you that you stayed,  
That you so royally repaid  
    All that I had to give.

## *Poems*

For the sweet temperance of your youth,  
Unconscious chivalry and truth,  
    And simple courtesies ;  
A soul as clear as southern lake,  
Yet strong as any cliffs that break  
    The might of northern seas ;

For these I loved you well,—and yet  
Could neither you nor I forget,  
    But spent we soberly  
The autumn days, that lay between  
The skirts of glory that had been,  
    Of glory that should be.

Unlike the month of snowy flowers,  
Unlike my April's rainbowed showers,  
    My consummate July  
Those autumn days ; and yet they wept  
Tears soft not sad, for all they kept  
    Of summer's greenery.

We loved the tarn with rocky shore,  
We loved to tread the windy moor,  
    And many a berried lane ;

## Poems

But most where, swollen with rains and rills,  
The waters of a hundred hills

Go hurrying down the plain ;

Where plenteous apples wax and fall,  
And stud o'er many a leafy hall

The vaults with fiery gems :

But often through their golden gleams  
Flowed-in the river of my dreams,

The lilied river Thames.

Then on another arm I leant,  
And then once more with him I went

Thro' field and wharf and town ;

And love caught up the flying hours,  
And eyes that were not calm as yours

Were imaged in my own.

A grave good-bye I bid you now ;  
Not lightly, but as those who know

Fair hospitality.

O loyal heart, be loyal still,  
And happy, happy where you will,

And sometimes think of me.

PRO CASTITATE

VIRGIN born of Virgin,  
To Thy shelter take me :  
Purest, holiest JESU,  
Chaste and holy make me.

Wisdom, power and beauty,  
These are not for me ;  
Give me, give me only  
Perfect Chastity.

By Thy Flagellation,  
Flesh immaculate—  
By Thine endless glory,  
Manhood consummate—

By Thy Mother Mary,  
By Thine Angel-host,  
By the Monks and Maidens  
Who have loved Thee most,

## *Poems*

Keep my flesh and spirit,  
Eyes and ears and speech,  
Taste and touch and feeling,  
Sanctify them each.

Through the fiery furnace  
Walk, O Love, beside me ;  
In the provocation  
From the tempter hide me.

When they come about me,  
Dreams of earthly passion,  
Drive O drive them from me,  
Of Thy sweet compassion :

For to feed beside Thee  
With the Virgin choir,  
In the vale of lilies,  
Is my one desire.

Not for might and glory  
Do I ask above,  
Seeking of Thee only  
Love and love and love.

39

FLOWERS FOR THE ALTAR

I

TELL us, tell us, holy shepherds,  
What at Bethlehem you saw.—  
‘Very God of Very God  
‘Asleep amid the straw.’

Tell us, tell us, all ye faithful,  
What this morning came to pass  
At the awful elevation  
In the Canon of the Mass.—  
‘Very God of Very God,  
‘By whom the worlds were made,  
‘In silence and in helplessness  
‘Upon the altar laid.’

Tell us, tell us, wondrous JESU,  
What has drawn Thee from above  
To the manger and the altar.—  
All the silence answers—Love.

# Poems

## II

Through the roaring streets of London  
Thou art passing, hidden Lord,  
Uncreated, Consubstantial,  
In the seventh heaven adored.

As of old the ever-Virgin  
Through unconscious Bethlehem  
Bore Thee, not in glad procession,  
Jewelled robe and diadem ;  
Not in pomp and not in power,  
Onward to Nativity,  
Shrined but in the tabernacle  
Of her sweet Virginity.

Still Thou goest by in silence,  
Still the world cannot receive,  
Still the poor and weak and weary  
Only, worship and believe.

A POEM WITHOUT A NAME

II

*I pray you this my song to take  
Not scornfully, for Boyhood's sake ;  
It is the last, until the day  
When your kind eyes shall bid me say  
Take, Archie, not of mine but me,  
And be mine only Poetry.*

THE PAST

METHOUGHT the sun in terror made his bed,  
The gentle stars in angry lightning fell,  
And shuddering winds thro' all the woodland fled,  
Pulling in every tree a passing bell.  
That night, on all the glory and the grace  
There rolled a numbing mist, and wrapped from sight  
The greening fields of my delightful land,  
Mildewing every tender bud to blight,—



## Poems

As the grey change o'erspreads a dying face—  
Till, corpse-like, stretched beneath a pall of skies,  
Earth stared at heaven with open sightless eyes ;  
Then in the hush went forth the soul of life,  
Drawn through the darkness by a gleaming hand :  
The strength of agony awoke, and strove  
Awhile for mastery to hold it back,  
But comet-like, beyond the laws of love,  
Branding the blackness with a fiery track  
It passed to space ; and, wearied of the strife,  
In the great after calm, I passed to sleep.

Did they not call ambrosial the night  
And holy once ? when (from the feet of God  
Set on the height where circles round and full  
The rainbow of perfection) starry troops  
Came floating, aureoled in dreamy light,  
And gracious dews distilling, as they trod  
The poppied plains of slumber.—Ah too dull  
My sense, such visions for my aid to call,  
My sleep too dry with fever, for the fall  
Of those strange dews, which quicken withered hopes.

# Poems

## THE PRESENT

And yet why strive to syllable my loss  
In chilly metaphors of night and sleep ?  
Leap in, O Love, O Flame divine, yea leap  
Upon them, shrivel them like paper ; so,  
In that refining fire, the encircling dross  
Of words shall melt away ; then will I keep,  
Stored in a silent Treasury I know,  
The pure reality, that in the spring—  
The resurrection of all loveliness—  
For me a star shall pierce the eastern cloud,  
And western breezes bear the tender rain ;  
For me a crocus flower shall burst its shroud,  
My Love, my buried Love, shall rise again.

Blow, winds, and make the fields a wilderness ;  
Roar, hurrying rivers to the weary sea ;  
Fall, cruel veils of snow, as desolate  
As human hearts, when passion fires have burnt  
To greyest ash ;—I shall nor hear nor see.

Within that Treasure-house of mine I wait,  
I wait, with Erôs glowing at my side ,  
From him, the mighty artist, I have learned  
How memories to brushes may be tied ;

## Poems

And tho' I moistened all my paints with tears,  
Yet on my walls as joyous imagery,  
With golden hopes inframèd, now appears  
As e'er of old was dreamed to vivify  
Ionian porticoes, when Greece was young,  
And wreathed with glancing vine Anacreon sung.  
Here, on the granite headland he is set,  
Like Michael in his triumph, and the waves  
In wild desire have tossed about his feet  
Their choicest pearls ;—and, here, he softly laves  
Limbs delicate, where beechen boughs are wet  
With jewelled drops and all is young and sweet ;—  
And here, a stranded lily on the beach,  
My Hylas, coronalled with curly gold,  
He lies beyond the water's longing reach  
Him once again essaying to enfold ;—  
Here, face uplifted to the twinkling sky  
He walks, like Agathôn the vastly-loved,  
Till with the dear Athenian I cry,  
' My Star of stars, would I might heaven be,  
Night-long, with many eyes, to gaze on thee ! '—  
And here, like Hyacinthus, as he moved  
Among the flowers, ere flower-like he sank  
Too soon to fade on green Eurotas' bank.

## Poems

But it is profanation now to speak  
Of thoughtless Hellene boys, or to compare  
The majesty and spiritual grace  
Of that design which consummates the whole.  
It is himself, as I have watched him, where  
The mighty organ's great Teutonic soul  
Passed into him and lightened in his face,  
And throbbed in every nerve and fired his cheek.

See, Love, I sing not of thee now alone,  
But am become a painter all thine own.

### THE FUTURE

Ah now in truth how shall we, can we meet ?  
Or wilt thou come to me through careless eyes,  
Loveliest 'mid the unlovely, in the street ?  
Or will thy voice be there, to harmonize  
The clanging and the clamour, where beneath  
The panting engines draw their burning breath ?  
Or shall I have to seek thee in a throng  
Of noble comrades round thee ?—have to pass  
The low luxurious laugh, or merry song,  
The pilèd golden fruit, and flashing glass ?  
I care not much ; however it may be,  
Eyes, ears and heart will compass only thee.

## Poems

Yet could I choose, then surely would I fix  
On that half-light, whose very name is sweet,  
The gloaming, when the sun and moonbeams mix,  
And light and darkness on each other rest  
Like lovers' lips, uncertain, tremulous ;  
And the All-mother's heart is loth to beat  
And break their union : then, I think, 'twere best  
To find thee pacing 'neath the sprouting boughs  
Of lime, alone—for so I saw thee first,  
When scarce my rose's crimson life had burst  
In blushes, from its calix to the sun.  
Alone—throughout my love has been apart ;  
When seen, then misconceived so utterly,  
I liken it (forgive the vanity)  
To those vermilion shades since light begun  
Existing, but which Turner only drew,  
While pointing critics had their little say,  
And all the world cried out, of course they knew  
Much better than the sun, could tell the way  
To colour him and his by proper rules,  
And Claude was great, great, great in all the schools  
As once Ephesian Dian.—Matters it  
To him, or you, or me ? While truth is truth,  
And love is love, you'll answer—Not a whit.

## Poems

### FOR EVER

Enough, the yearning is unsatisfied,  
Resolved again into a plea for faith.  
Believe the true elixir is within,  
Although I sought to draw from that full tide  
Some crystal drops of evidence, to win  
A little vapour only—yet believe,  
Believe the essence of a perfect love  
Is there, and worthy. Not a tinge of shame  
My words can colour. Of *thine own* receive,  
Yes, of thy very being. It shall prove  
Indeed a poem, though without a name.

# Poems

## 4 I

### THE SHRINE

THERE is a shrine whose golden gate  
Was opened by the Hand of God ;  
It stands serene, inviolate,  
Though millions have its pavement trod ;  
As fresh, as when the first sunrise  
Awoke the lark in Paradise.

'Tis compassed with the dust and toil  
Of common days, yet should there fall  
A single speck, a single soil  
Upon the whiteness of its wall,  
The angels' tears in tender rain  
Would make the temple theirs again.

Without, the world is tired and old,  
But, once within the enchanted door,  
The mists of time are backward rolled,  
And creeds and ages are no more ;  
But all the human-hearted meet  
In one communion vast and sweet.

## *Poems*

I enter—all is simply fair,  
Nor incense-clouds, nor carven throne  
But in the fragrant morning air  
A gentle lady sits alone ;  
My mother—ah ! whom should I see  
Within, save ever only thee ?



## Poems

42

(1)

ONE night I dreamt that in a gleaming hall  
You played, and overhead the air was sweet  
With waving kerchiefs ; then a sudden fall  
Of flowers ; and jewels clashed about your feet.  
Around you glittering forms, a starry ring,  
In echo sang of youth and golden ease :  
You leant to me a moment, crying—‘ Sing,  
‘ If, as you say, you love me, sing with these.’—

In vain my lips were opened, for my throat  
Was choked somewhence, my tongue was sore and dry,  
And in my soul alone the answering note ;  
Till, in a piercing discord, one shrill cry,  
As of a hunted creature, from me broke.  
You laughed, and in great bitterness I woke.

## Poems

(2)

I THANK thee, Love, that thou hast overthrown  
The tyranny of Self ; I would not now  
Even in desire, possess thee mine alone  
In land-locked anchorage : nay rather go,  
Ride the high seas, the fruitless human seas,  
Where white-winged ships are set for barren shores,  
Though freighted all, those lovely argosies,  
And laden with a wealth of rarest stores.

Go, draw them after thee, and lead them on  
With thine own music, to the ideal west,  
Where, in the youth of ages, vaguely shone  
The term of all, the Islands of the Blest.

I too dare steer, for once-loved haven's sake,  
My tiny skiff along thy glorious wake.

## Poems

(3)

A BOYISH friendship ! No, respond the chimes,  
The years of chimes fulfilled since we parted,  
Since ' au revoir ' you said among the limes,  
And passed away in silence tender-hearted.  
I hold it cleared by time that not of heat,  
Or sudden passion my great Love was born :  
I hold that years the calumny defeat  
That it would fade as freshness off the morn.

That it was fathered not by mean desire  
Of eye and ear, doth cruel distance prove.—  
My life is cleft to steps that lift it higher,  
And with my growing manhood grows my Love.

Then come and tread the fruits of disconnection  
To the sweet vintage of your own perfection.

## *Poems*

(4)

O come, my king, and fill the palaces  
Where sceptred Loss too long hath held her state,  
With courts of Joyaunce, and a laughing breeze  
Of voices.—If thou willest, come ;—I wait  
Unquestioning, no servant, but thy slave.  
I plead no merit, and no claim for wages,  
Nor that sweet favour which my sovereign gave  
In other days, of his own grace : but pages  
Are privileged to linger at the door  
With longing eyes, while nobles kiss the hand  
Of him the noblest, though elect no more  
To touch the train, or at the throne to stand.

But come, content me with the lowest place,  
So be it that I see thy royal face.

43

DUM AGONIZATUR ANIMA, ORENT  
ASSISTENTES

*Think, kind Jesu, my salvation  
Caused Thy wondrous Incarnation,  
Leave me not to reprobation.*

*Faint and weary Thou hast sought me,  
On the Cross of anguish bought me ;  
Shall such grace be vainly brought me ?*

BEHOLD me will-less, witless in the night ;  
With hands that feel the illimitable dark  
I walk, untouched, untouching ; every face  
Is senseless as a mask, save when I cry  
‘ O little children turn away your eyes.’—  
This for the day ; but when the hush is spread  
Wherein Thou givest Thy belovèd sleep,  
I call Thee to my witness—though I sin,  
I suffer : I confess, do all we can  
Thou art not mocked, nor dost Thou mock at us.  
Who laughs to scorn the anger of a babe ?

## Poems

Or who despises infants, if they play  
At building houses ? so we storm and toil,  
And squander all our passion and our thought,  
And Thou regardest not ; for on us lies  
The weight of everlasting nothingness.  
War with the angels ; neither war nor peace  
With us, who flutter willing to our doom,  
And need no sword to drive from Paradise.  
See, I believe more fully than the Saint  
Who trod the waters in the might of love.  
See, I believe, and own him for the fool  
Who saith ‘ there is no God ’, and therefore sins.  
Believe—what profit in it ? I have loved :—  
Ay, once I strained and stretched thro’ haze of doubt  
If haply I might catch with passionate hand  
The garment-hem of Thee : I half believed,  
But wholly loved ; once (Thou rememberest) prayed,  
‘ I love Thee, love Thee ; only give me light,  
And I will follow Thee where’er Thou goest.’  
‘ I will ’ I said and knew not ; now I know  
And will not, cannot will. . . . .  
. . . . .  
What ? Is a way cleft thro’ the stony floors,  
And dost Thou stand Thyself above the stair,

## Poems

In Thine old sweetness and benignity,  
Spreading Thy wounded hands, and saying ‘ Son,  
Thou sinnest, I have suffered. Mount and see  
The fulness of my Passion : though these steps  
Be hard to flesh and blood, remember this,  
That along all intolerable paths  
The benediction of my feet hath passed. . . .  
. . . . .’

To gentleness so inexpressible,  
To love so far beyond imagining  
I answer not ; but in my soul fill up  
The faint conception of the artist monk,  
Who soared with Paul into the seventh heaven,  
But could not paint the anger of the Lamb.  
I seem to lie for ever in some porch,  
While down the nave there creeps the awful dirge,  
And writhes about the pillars—whispering  
The uttermost extremity of man :  
Till the low music ceases ; and a scream  
Breaks shuddering from the choir, ‘ Let me not  
Be burnt in fires undying.’ \* \* \*

\* \* \* . . .  
\* \* \* \* \*

And some are there unscathed of flame or sword,

## Poems

Yet on their brows the seal of suffering,  
And in their hands the rose of martyrdom,  
(Have pity upon me, ye that were my friends)  
With arms about each other,—aureoles  
That mingle into one triumphant star ;  
A fount of wonder in their pensive eyes,  
Sprung from the thought that pain is consummate—  
'To him that overcometh'—half forgotten  
The victory, so long the battle was,  
Begun when manhood was a thing to be :  
Not as they send the boyish sailor out,  
A father's lingering hand amid his hair,  
A mother's kisses warm upon his cheek,  
And in his heart the unspoken consciousness  
That though upon his grave no gentle fingers  
Shall set the crocus, yet in the old home  
There shall be aye a murmur of the sea,  
A fair remembrance and a tender pride.  
Not so for these the dawn of battle rose.

. . . . .  
\* \* \* \* \*  
. . . . .  
\* \* \* \* \*

So one by one the knights were panoplied.



## Poems

But now they enter in where never voice  
Of clamorous Babylon shall vex them more,  
To Syon the undivided, to the peace,  
The given peace earth neither makes nor mars,  
Beyond the angels, and the angels' Queen,  
Beyond the avenues of saints, where rests,  
Deep in the Beatifical Idea,  
The sum of peace, the Human Heart of God.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ah ! whose is that red rose that only lies  
Unclaimed \* \*

. . . . .

Five knots of snowdrops on the garden bank  
Beneath the hill—how satisfied they seem  
Against the barren hedge, wherein by this  
The pleasant saps and juices are astir  
To work the greening snowdrops do not see.  
I leaning from my window am in doubt  
If summer brings a flower so loveable,  
Of such a meditative restfulness  
As this, with all her roses and carnations.  
The morning hardly stirs their noiseless bells ;  
Yet could I fancy that they whispered ' Home ',  
For all things gentle all things beautiful

## Poems

I hold, my mother, for a part of thee.

\* \* \* \* \*

As watered grass beyond the glaring street,  
As drop of evening on a fighting field,  
As convent bells that chime for complin-tide  
Heard in the gas-light of the theatre,  
So unto me the image of a face,  
A certain face that all the angels know.

\* \* \* \* \*

Bright are the diadems of all pure loves,  
But none so bright as that whereon are set  
The mingled names of Father and of Mother.  
Dear are true friends, and sweet is gratitude  
For grateful deeds ; but what the sum of all  
To that perennial love we hardly thank  
More than the sun for shining while 'tis day,  
Or at the dusk the cheerful candlelight ?

How wholly fair is all without my soul,  
The evershifting lights upon the hills,  
The eastern flush upon the beechen stems,  
And the green network of ascending paths  
Wherein again the spring shall bid us ride,  
With all the blood aglow along our veins,

## Poems

And every mountain be 'delectable',  
And every plain a pleasant land of Beulah.

\* \* \* \* \*

Suppose it but a fancy that it groaned,  
This dear creation,—rather let it sing  
In an exuberance and excess of gladness.

\* \* \* \* \*

Suppose a kindly mother-influence . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

And sin alone a transitory fever,  
For which in some mysterious Avilon  
Beyond the years, some consummate Hereafter,  
A fount of healing springs for all alike.

. . . \* \* \*

No, Love! Love! Love! Thou knowest that I  
cannot,

I cannot live without Thee. Yet this way—  
Is there no other road to Calvary

Than the one way of sorrows? \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

I thought I lay at home and watched the glow  
The ruddy fire-light cast about my bed;  
Upon me undefinable the sense  
Of something dreadful, till I slept and dreamed.

# Poems

## THE DREAM

I stood amid the lights that never die,  
The only stars the dawning passes by,  
Beneath the whisper of the central dome  
That holds and hides the mystic heart of Rome.

But in mine eyes the light of other times,  
And in mine ears the sound of English chimes ;  
I smelled again the freshness of the morn,  
The primal incense of the daisied lawn.

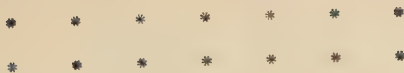
\* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \*

\* \* \* I said

‘ And have I come so very far indeed ? ’

The everlasting murmur echoes ‘ Far  
As from green earth is set the furthest star  
Men have not named. A journey none retrace  
Is thine, and steps the seas could not efface.’  
‘ How cold and pitiless is the voice of Truth,’  
I cried ; ‘ Ah ! who will give me my lost youth ?  
Ah ! who restore the years the locust ate,  
Hard to remember, harder to forget ? ’



A multitude of voices sweet and grave,  
A long procession up the sounding nave.

‘The Lion of the tribe of Judah, He  
Has conquered, but in Wounds and Agony.  
The ensign of His triumph is the Rood,  
His royal robe is purple, but with Blood.

And we who follow in His Martyr-train  
Have access only thro’ the courts of pain.  
Yet on the Via dolorosa He  
Precedes us in His sweet humanity.

A Man shall be a covert from the heat,  
Whereon in vain the sandy noon shall beat :  
A Man shall be a perfect summer sun,  
When all the western lights are paled and gone.

A Man shall be a Father, Brother, Spouse,  
A land, a city and perpetual House :  
A Man shall lift us to the Angels’ shore :  
A Man shall be our God for evermore.’

## *Poems*

Christ, God, or rather JESU, it is true,  
True the old story of Gethsemane.  
Remember then the unfathomed agony  
That touched upon the caverns of despair,  
Whence never diver hath regain'd the sun.—  
Thou knowest, but I know not ; save me then  
From beating the impenetrable rock.  
By that Thine hour of weakness be my Strength,  
And I will follow Thee where'er Thou goest.

44

A SONG OF EIGHTEEN

STRAIN them, O winds, the sails of the years,  
    Outspread on the mystic sea ;  
Faster and faster, for laughter or tears,  
    O bear my story to me !  
Waft it, O Love, on thy purple wings,  
    The dawn is breaking to pass :  
Strike it, O Life, from thy deeper strings,  
    And drown the music that was.

Yet lovely the tremulous haze  
That curtained the dreamful afar,  
Thro' the which some face, like a star,  
Would lighten, too sudden for praise.  
And white were our loves on their way  
As morn on the hills of the south ;  
The kisses that rounded their mouth  
As fresh as the grasses in May.

## *Poems*

They passed ; but the silvery pain  
Of our tears was easily told,—  
For the day but an hour was old,  
At noon we should meet them again.

Weary am I of ideal and of mist,  
The shroud of life that is dead ;—  
And, as the passionate sculptor who kissed  
The lips of marble to red,  
Ask I a breath that is part of my own,  
Yet drawn from a soul more sweet ;—  
Or, as the shaft that upsoareth alone  
Undiademed, incomplete,  
Claim I the glory predestined to me  
In the Mother Builder's will,  
Portion and place in the Temple to be  
Till the age her times fulfil.



45

LAST WORDS

*From the Italian*

I, LIVING, drew thee from the vale  
Parnassus' height to climb with me.  
I, dying, bid thee turn, and scale  
Alone the hill of Calvary.

46

A SONG

THE world is young today :  
    Forget the gods are old,  
    Forget the years of gold  
When all the months were May.

A little flower of Love  
    Is ours, without a root,  
    Without the end of fruit,  
Yet—take the scent thereof.

There may be hope above,  
    There may be rest beneath ;  
    We see them not, but Death  
Is palpable—and Love.

47

ENOUGH

WHEN all my words were said,  
When all my songs were sung;  
I thought to pass among  
The unforgotten dead,

A Queen of ruth to reign  
With her, who gathereth tears  
From all the lands and years,  
The Lesbian maid of pain ;

That lovers, when they wove  
The double myrtle-wreath,  
Should sigh with mingled breath  
Beneath the wings of Love :

‘ How piteous were her wrongs,  
Her words were falling dew,  
All pleasant verse she knew,  
But not the Song of songs.’

## *Poems*

Yet now, O Love, that you  
Have kissed my forehead, I  
Have sung indeed, can die,  
And be forgotten too.

# Poems

48

*O, a moon face*

*In a shadowy place.*

LEAN over me—ah so,—let fall

About my face and neck the shroud

That thrills me as a thunder-cloud

Full of strange lights, electrical.

Sweet moon, with pain and passion wan,

Rain from thy loneliness of light

The primal kisses of the night

Upon a new Endymion ;

The boy who, wrapped from moil and moan,

With cheeks for ever round and fair,

Is dreaming of the nights that were

When lips immortal touched his own.

I marked an old man yesterday,

His body many-fingered grief

Distorted as a frozen leaf ;

He fell, and cursed the rosy way.

## *Poems*

O better than a century  
Of heavy years that trail the feet,  
More full of being, more complete  
A stroke of time with youth and thee.

49

HE WOULD HAVE HIS LADY SING

SING me the men ere this  
Who, to the gate that is  
A cloven pearl uprapt,  
The big white bars between  
With dying eyes have seen  
The sea of jasper, lapt  
About with crystal sheen ;

And all the far pleasance  
Where linkèd Angels dance,  
With scarlet wings that fall  
Magnifical, or spread  
Most sweetly over-head,  
In fashion musical,  
Of cadenced lutes instead.

Sing me the town they saw  
Withouten fleck or flaw,

## *Poems*

Aflame, more fine than glass  
Of fair Abbayes the boast,  
More glad than wax of cost  
Doth make at Candlemas  
The Lifting of the Host :

Where many Knights and Dames,  
With new and wondrous names,  
One great Laudaté Psalm  
Go singing down the street ;—  
'Tis peace upon their feet,  
In hand 'tis pilgrim palm  
Of Goddes Land so sweet :—

Where Mother Mary walks  
In silver lily stalks,  
Star-tirèd, moon-bedight ;  
Where Cecily is seen,  
With Dorothy in green,  
And Magdalen all white,  
The maidens of the Queen.

Sing on—the Steps untrod,  
The Temple that is God,



## *Poems*

Where incense doth ascend,  
Where mount the cries and tears  
Of all the dolorous years,  
With moan that ladies send  
Of durance and sore fears :—

And Him who sitteth there,  
The Christ of purple hair,  
And great eyes deep with ruth,  
Who is of all things fair  
That shall be, or that were,  
The sum, and very truth.  
Then add a little prayer,

That since all these be so,  
Our Liege, who doth us know,  
Would fend from Sathanas,  
And bring us, of His grace,  
To that His joyous place :  
So we the Doom may pass,  
And see Him in the Face.

CORE

WHERE in dawnward Sicily  
Gentle rivers wed the sea,  
Bitter life was given me.

Gods that are most desolate  
For their loveliness and state  
Being made the mock of fate,

Mingling wine with ruddy fire  
And the passion of the lyre,  
Filled my veins with all desire.

Twain the robes they fashioned me,  
Dainty, delicate to see,  
Girt about with mockery :

Dowers twain for me they planned,  
Holding in their other hand  
All my times, an hour's sand ;—

## *Poems*

Love, the mystic rose of life,  
Grafted with a sanguine knife  
On the thorns of sin and strife ;

Poetry, the hand that wrings  
(Bruised albeit at the strings)  
Music from the soul of things.

But to either gift a mate  
Added they in subtle hate—  
This the trick they learned of Fate ;—

Shame, to draw the tender blood  
From the palm of maidenhood,  
Leaving it a yellow rod ;

Weariness of all that is,  
Tired sorrow, tired bliss,  
Nothing is more sore than this.

Therefore turn thy eyes on me,  
O Thou Praise of Sicily,  
Honey-sweet Persephone,

## *Poems*

Who, beyond all ban and bale,  
With supreme compassion pale,  
Spreadest quiet for a veil.

In the soft Catanian hills,  
Gleaming by the gleaming rills  
Yet are blown thy daffodils ;

See, I bear them as is meet,  
Lay them on thy pallid feet,  
Where in marble thou art sweet.

Hear the story of my wrong,  
Thou to whom all perished song  
And departed loves belong.

Even as the maiden grass,  
Recreating all that pass,  
Mine exceeding beauty was.

Men, who heard me singing, said  
' Bays are heavy on thy head ;  
' Take a myrtle leaf instead '.

## *Poems*

‘ How shall Erôs’ call be still ’—  
Ever answered I—‘ until  
‘ Anterôs the song fulfil ? ’

Once at vesper-tide I sat  
In a bower of pomegranate,  
Where it was my use to wait,

Till the hour of phantasies  
Bade my soul’s desire arise  
Veiled, against the blinded skies :

But unveiled he came to me,  
With the passion of the sea,  
That night, by the scarlet tree.

Lightly from the boat he leapt ;  
Snowy surge the shingle swept ;  
Whiter were his feet that stepped

Up the jewelled beach ;—and on  
As a pillared flame he shone,  
Clear, and glad to look upon.

## *Poems*

Was he one whom years alloy  
Or the god of ageless joy,  
Dionysos, or a boy ?

Never was such hair, I wist,  
Lighted as a water-mist,  
In the noons of amethyst ;—

Eyes, of colour only seen  
Where the far waves' palest green  
Faints into the azure sheen.

There his eyes were full on me  
With the passion of the sea,  
That night, by the scarlet tree.

' Lily of the amber west,  
' Whither over ocean's breast  
' Suns and heroes drop to rest,

' From the morning lands I come,  
' Laughing through the laughing foam,  
' Seeking Love in Vesper's home.

## Poems

‘ Sudden as the falling star,  
‘ Wingèd as the victor car,  
‘ Nears the doom to blight and mar.

‘ Full desire, and faint delight,  
‘ Words that leap, and lips that bite  
‘ With the panther lithe and light,—

‘ These—while blushes bud and blow,  
‘ While life’s purple torrents flow—  
‘ If we know not, shall we know ?

‘ Are they hid beyond the hours ?  
‘ Shall they feed on lotus-flowers ?  
‘ Warm us in the sunless bowers ?

‘ Thou art beautiful, and I  
‘ Beautiful ; I know not why,  
‘ Save to love before we die.’

But a day—a year is sped  
Since these words were sung or said,  
Since he loved me—he is dead.

## *Poems*

### 51

FAR above the shaken trees,  
In the pale blue palaces,  
Laugh the high gods at their ease :  
We with tossèd incense woo them,  
We with all abasement sue them,  
But shall never climb unto them,  
Nor see their faces.

Sweet my sister, Queen of Hades,  
Where the quiet and the shade is,  
Of the cruel deathless ladies  
Thou art pitiful alone.  
Unto thee I make my moan,  
Who the ways of earth hast known  
And her green places.

Feed me with thy lotus-flowers,  
Lay me in thy sunless bowers,  
Whither shall the heavy hours



## Poems

Never trail their hated feet,  
Making bitter all things sweet ;  
Nevermore shall creep to meet  
The perished dead.

There 'mid shades innumerable,  
There in meads of asphodel,  
Sleeping ever, sleeping well,  
They who toiled and who aspired,  
They, the lovely and desired,  
With the nations of the tired  
Have made their bed.

There is neither fast nor feast,  
None is greatest, none is least ;  
Times and orders all have ceased.  
There the bay-leaf is not seen ;  
Clean is foul and foul is clean ;  
Shame and glory, these have been  
But shall not be.

When we pass away in fire,  
What is found beyond the pyre ?  
Sleep, the end of all desire.

## *Poems*

Lo, for this the heroes fought ;  
This the gem the merchant bought,  
This the seal of laboured thought  
And subtilty.

# Poems

52



UNTO the central height of purple Rome,—  
    The crown of martyrdom,  
Set as a heart within the passionate plain  
    Of triumph and of pain,  
Where common roses in their blow and bud  
    Speak empire and show blood—  
From colourless flowers and from breasts that burn,  
    Mother ! to thee we turn.  
The phantom light before thee flees and faints,  
    O City of the Saints !  
In whom, with palms and wounds, there tarrieth  
    The unconquerable faith ;  
Where, as on Carmel, our Elijah stands  
    Above the faithless lands ;  
But conscious of earth's evening, not of them,  
    Lifts toward Jerusalem,  
Where is the altar of High Sacrifice,  
    His full prophetic eyes. . . .



53

METHOUGHT, through many years and lands,  
I sped along an arrowy flood,  
That leapt and lapt my face and hands,  
I knew not were it fire or blood.

I saw no sun in any place ;  
A ghastly glow about me spread,  
Unlike the light of nights and days,  
From out the depth where writhe the dead.

I passed—their fleshless arms uprose  
To draw me to the depths beneath :  
My eyes forgot the power to close,  
As other men's, in sleep or death.

I saw the end of every sin ;  
I weighed the profit and the cost ;  
I felt Eternity begin,  
And all the ages of the lost.

## *Poems*

The Crucifix was on my breast ;

I pressed the nails against my side ;

And unto Him, Who knew no rest

For thirty years, I turned and cried :

‘ Sweet Lord ! I say not, give me ease ;

Do what Thou wilt, Thou doest good ;

And all Thy saints went up to peace,

In crowns of fire or robes of blood.’

## NOTES ON THE POEMS

THERE exist original MSS. of all the poems in this volume with the exception of numbers 46, 48, and 50. These three are edited from copies. [Originals of 46 and 50 have since been found, so that only 48 is now missing. See note to 46.]

The writing is plain, so that there is never any doubt about a word. The punctuation is so careless as to be generally worthless. There are commas and full-stops, but these are often misplaced, and all kinds of pauses are frequently indicated by a dash. My rule in punctuation has been to observe the original where possible,—interpreting the dashes, where they merely disfigure the text, in the simplest manner: but in those cases where an ambiguity in the grammar or the concatenation of clauses would be resolved by systematic punctuation, I have left it unresolved, if there was any uncertainty as to which of two constructions was intended. Examples of this are p. 52, the fourth and fifth verses from the end, which have their original stopping; and the second stanza of *Coré*, p. 116.

There is a free use of initial capitals in the MS. While it is easy to write small unpretending capitals, the translation of them into type often disfigures the text. But, though I see no advantage in this, I have respected the MS. and retained most of the capitals. Dolben's practice however was not consistent, and I have found precedent in it somewhat to reduce their number. He also commonly wrote *Ob* for the vocative *O*. I have in some places altered this to the usual form. I have hyphenated more words than he did, but the unusual hyphens are his own, e.g. *pale-pink*, p. 5. And I have occasionally indented a line to mark a new section in poems written without a break. I have now enumerated all the grammatical liberties that I have taken. The poems are printed in the order of an existing MS. collection, which is approximately chronological, since it was originally made by transcribing the poems as he sent them to his family: and though a few of the poems are manifestly out of order, the

## Notes

exact dates of others are too uncertain to make an accurate sequence possible. I give what is known of their dates in the notes. The poems are printed word for word, except for the change of one word on p. 92, and the omission of some lines from the unfinished poem No. 43. These alterations are described in the notes to those poems. Wherever there is more than one version of the same poem, I have (with the exception of one line in No. 2) always chosen the latest version, since that is invariably the best: but I should add that considerate emendation is generally the main evidence of its being the later version.

My poetical judgement, jealous for Dolben's poetical reputation, would have led me to exclude some of the poems here given, e. g. 25, 29, 34. Their presence may be some assurance that nothing good has been omitted. Of the earlier immature poems an account is given in the Memoir: of the later poems all are given but three very unworthy pieces, two of which are comic. The following notes on the several poems are as few and as short as the conditions allow.

1. This and the three following poems were written at School dating 1864.

2. An account of the three blank-verse pieces called 'Vocation', of which this is the last, will be found in the Memoir, pp. liii seq.—when I wrote that, I knew only the first draft of this poem (*From the Cloister*), which was originally styled 'Sequel to Vocation'; and in deciding to print this and not the other two, I was unaware that Dolben himself had distinguished it above the others by a careful revision. It turned out that there were three or four copies of it, showing different readings; and that the latest of these had been overlooked, probably because it was shorter than the others. But it is no doubt his ultimate revision: and it is so well amended that, when I substituted it for the older version, I had to alter my critical description, which was already typed in the proofs of the Memoir. And since Dolben in his revision discarded the old title, this separates it from the other two sections, and in some measure implies that he had discarded

## Notes

them. I have printed this latest version, except in one line, where I have retained his original.

But clinging lichen and black shrivelled moss.

The revision transposes *clinging* and *shrivelled*: manifestly because *shrivelled* does not describe moss. But the emendation is not satisfactory, so that I agreed to his sister's desire that the familiar old line should be kept in this place. On p. 7 the last nine lines are punctuated in the MS. by the question being made at *forgotten*, thus: *willow-boughs. So soon forgotten?* I have removed the quether to the end of the sentence and repeated it there.

3. I give the original Latin hymn. In this as in his other translations it may be seen that his method is poetical.

Amorem sensus erige  
ad te, largitor veniae,  
ut fias clemens cordibus  
purgatis inde sordibus.

Benigne multum, Domine,  
Tu lapsum scis in homine,  
infirmum est materia,  
versamur in miseria.

Causa tibi sit agnita,  
nulla mens est incognita;  
aufer a nobis omnia  
fallentis mundi somnia.

Dives pauper effectus es,  
pro nobis crucifixus es;  
lavans a tuo latere  
nos munda vita vetere.

Externi huc advenimus,  
in exilio gemimus,  
tu portus es et patria,  
duc nos ad vitae atria.

Felix, quae sitit caritas  
te fontem vitae veritas,  
beati valde oculi  
te speculantis populi.



## Notes

Grandis est tibi gloria  
tuæ laudis memoria,  
quam sine fine celebrant,  
qui cor ab imis elevant.

From Mone I, p. 97, who notes 'Amoris sensum wäre besser'.

5. This and the following 13 poems, i. e. Nos. 5-18, were written after he left school, and nearly all at Luffenham in 1865.

6. Under this poem, which is dated Dec. 1864, Dolben has written 'Impromptu, written at a railway-station at night'. It was in London. Among the earliest poems spoken of in the Memoir, p. xxii, as being recovered from the 'holocaust', the following exists,

Goodnight, dear—, and not goodbye, I say.  
All must be night to me while you're away :  
Yet ever in this present night of sorrow  
Memory will point to me a bright tomorrow.

Whether or no he remembered his burnt poem, this is an example of his art. The actual emotion was years old, and had already taken form, but the poetic suggestion was consciously or unconsciously awaiting a worthier artistic expression. I print the old lines here because, while they may serve as a specimen of his earliest schoolboy verses, they confirm the account which I give of his artistic habit. There is another example in the note to No. 43.

7. The other poem with this title is No. 40. Though they are numbered I and II, I have left them in their chronological order among the rest.

8. His father asked him one day to write a poem on the garden of Finedon Hall, and this was the result.

10. The second line is, I think, his later correction of the variant

'His basket with frail ferns and flowers fills'.

11. In the original MS. the punctuation of the 4th stanza shows only a comma after *waking* and a full-stop at *dream*. There

## Notes

is a little speck on the paper above the comma which is most like the upper part of a semicolon. The grammar is uncertain, and I give it as an example.

14. Date is Summer 1865, at the lakes. There are two or three copies, in which the last 6 lines differ. The text given seems the ultimate revision. I have not found any Greek original for these lines, though the difficulty in expressing the thought suggests translation. The word *desired* makes its three syllables out of the double vowel sound in the second syllable, as Tennyson pronounced, and would have written it, *desierd*, not *desirèd*.

15. There are two versions of this. The differences are few and unimportant, chiefly affecting the penultimate stanza.

17. Dated summer 1865. The original is

Καθάνοισα δὲ κείσεται ποτα κωὺ μναμοσύνα σέθεν  
ἔσσειτ' οὔτε τότ' οὔτ' ὕστερον· οὐ γὰρ πεδέχεις βρόδων  
τῶν ἐκ Πιερίας, ἀλλ' ἀφάνης κῆν' Αἶδα δόμοις  
φοιτάσεις πεδ' ἀμαύρων νεκύων ἐκπεποταμένα.

18. Of this poem there are 4 copies slightly differing. I take that which I believe to be the latest. Dolben was not satisfied with the poem, and took much pains to amend it. It was published in the *Union Review*. See note to Memoir, li. p. 140.

19. This poem and 29 (which is out of place) and probably 20 and 21, were written during the Lincolnshire period.

stanza 3, l. 3. *never-falling*. sic, but unhyphenated in MS.

stanza 10, l. 2. A description of the Lincolnshire landscape. Memoir, p. xci.

22. Here begins a series of poems all written in 1866, and mostly at Boughrood. This parody of Clough may be taken as a tribute atoning in some measure for the harsh judgement in his letter on p. lxxxviii.

23. Stanza 2, l. 8. *Ruddy-fruited asphodel*. I cannot explain this epithet.

24. ll. 20, 21. There is no quether in the MS. I have left the punctuation as I found it, not perceiving what was intended.

## Notes

25. This is one of the poems which I would willingly have omitted : and I could not print it without protest. It was published in the *Union Review*.

28. This poem illustrates very clearly much that I have written in the Memoir. In line 6 'And loves can nevermore descend' is the simplest statement of his own experience. His love had descended from Christ to a man, which in the next life would be impossible. 'The love-current of a human soul' (line 9) should be devoted to God. In lines 15 and following, 'Remember this' etc., he here begs his friend to measure the greatness of his love for him by the fact that he loved him with the same *love-current* which he had before devoted to Christ ; and had thus, for his sake, lost his love of Christ.—Going on, he narrates a vision or ecstasy, in which he returns to Christ, and his earthly love then appears as bitterness ; and he concludes by inviting his friend to devote himself to Christ.

29. This poem is of the same date as 19.

31. The Latin lines are as follows :

Est prope Cimmerios longo spelunca recessu,  
Mons cavus, ignavi domus et penetralia Somni :  
Quo nunquam radiis oriens, mediusve, cadensve  
Phoebus adire potest. Nebulae caligine mixtae  
Exhalantur humo, dubiaeq; crepuscula lucis.  
Non vigil ales ibi cristati cantibus oris  
Evocat auroram : nec voce silentia rumpunt  
Sollicitive canes, canibusve sagacior anser.  
Non fera, non pecudes, non moti flamine rami,  
Humanaeve sonum reddunt convicia linguae.  
Muta quies habitat ; saxo tamen exit ab imo  
Rivus aquae Lethes : per quem cum murmure labens  
Invitat somnos crepitantibus unda lapillis.  
Ante fores antri fecunda papavera florent,  
Innumeraeq; herbae : quarum de lacte soporem  
Nox legit, et spargit per opacas humida terras.

Ov. *Met.* xi. 592 seq.

## Notes

32. The original, Catullus xxxiv, is as follows. Only the first 3 stanzas are followed.

Dianae sumus in fide  
Puellae et pueri integri :  
Dianam pueri integri  
Puellaeque canamus.  
O Latonia, maximi  
Magna progenies Iovis,  
Quam mater prope Deliam  
Deposivit olivam,  
Montium domina ut fores  
Silvarumque virentium  
Saltuumque reconditorum  
Amniumque sonantum.

. . . . .

It is interesting that this translation and No. 17 should have been written by a boy who was unable to pass his entrance examination at Balliol college.

33. The original is an anonymous scholion cited by Athenaeus xv. 695. D. I owe this reference to my friend J. W. Mackail.

Σύν μοι πῖνε, συνήβα,  
συνέρα, συστεφανηφόρει,  
Σύν μοι μαινομένῳ μάλισσά,  
σὺν σώφροσι σωφρόνεται.

34. The original is Martial xii. 30.

Siccus, sobrius est Aper, quid ad me ?  
Servum sic ego laudo, non amicum.

36. This poem dates Autumn 1866: and the following poems are in place.

37. This is the poem alluded to in Memoir p. xcix.

40. The title makes this poem a sequel to No. 7. A few lines before its third section (The Future) on p. 86, it passes from its poetic form into an epistolary address and gradually sinking falls very low in the unfortunate passage about Turner, which must be traced to Ruskin. The only date which it bears is however Dec. 1866.

## Notes

41. 'The Shrine', which is dated Oct. 1866, has been printed in various collections. There is on the back of the MS., an epigram that has escaped the collection. I give it here.

### MAXIMIAN

An unashamed tyrant in every vice—  
An abject slave in cringing cowardice—  
Child, in all things save in simplicity—  
Brute, save in irresponsibility—  
Believer but in sense and taste and touch—  
My God, and can it be Thou diedst for such?

42. Second sonnet, p. 92, line 7. The MS. has  
'Though freighted all with lovely argosies.'

As I cannot make sense of this I have printed *those* for *with*, and inserted a comma; not as a possible correction but to remove an obstacle to the reader.

In the third sonnet, p. 93, in the last line *To* is the MS. reading.

43. Here begin the poems of 1867.

This poem was never completed, and the original MS. has several *lacunae* which are represented in the text by asterisks. The dots in the text represent *omissions* which, considering the imperfect state of the poem, I thought myself justified in adding to the original *lacunae*. The reason for these omissions will be understood if poem 40 be remembered. It seems as if, when writing these blank-verse poems, Dolben unconsciously fell back into the earlier manner of his old blank-verse poems, which are described in the Memoir (pp. liv. and seq.). They show a tendency to deteriorate under the influence of the earlier associations, and I would willingly have omitted a good part of the end of No. 40. I had however no justification: but in this case the unfinished condition of the poem invited the omission of the worser parts, which greatly detracted from the dignity and beauty of the whole. Though the excluded passages were condemned wholly on artistic grounds, it may be noted that they contain some verses of an ecclesiastical tone, which might have been welcome to sectarian curiosity: and it might be supposed that I had omitted them for

## Notes

that reason. But the two things naturally coincide : it is exactly where he falls into this vein that he falls from poetry. I have not omitted a word which I would willingly have printed, nor a word which I could not have persuaded him to delete.

On p. 102 is this couplet :

Ah ! who restore the years the locust ate,  
Hard to remember, harder to forget ?

On the fifty-fourth page of the Memoir the original of these lines will be found. It is another instance of an old expression being worked upon (as described in note to poem 6) ; and also I think it is a further indication that he had discarded the *Vocation* poems.

45. There is no one mentioned in the Memoir to whom this can have been addressed. It is a rather improved version of the epitaph which Chiabrera wrote for his own tomb in San Giacomo at Savona : for a variant reading see the next note. Dolben found it no doubt in Father Faber's books where it is used as a motto in its original sense.

Amico, io vivendo cercava conforto  
Nel monte Parnasso :  
Tu, meglio consigliato, cercalo  
Nel Calvario.

46. Lord Esher has very kindly sent me all the variants in his copies of six poems, 'made in Wm. Johnson's [Cory's] pupil-room three years after Dolben's death.' Variants occur in five poems thus :

No. 4, p. 12, l. 10.	<i>violets</i>	for	<i>skies were.</i>
14. 8.	<i>glorious</i>	,,	<i>glowing.</i>
17.	<i>Gentle</i>	,,	<i>Turtle.</i>
15. 1.	<i>light</i>	,,	<i>bright.</i>
16.	<i>omits never.</i>		
17.	<i>on</i>	for	<i>upon.</i>
16. 19.	<i>He</i>	,,	<i>You.</i>
17. 10.	<i>truer</i>	,,	<i>clearer.</i>
No. 9. 26. 1.	<i>penny</i>	,,	<i>puny.</i>

## Notes

- |               |                   |                                                  |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| No. 9. p. 26. | 4. <i>brink</i>   | for <i>breast</i> .                              |
|               | 5. <i>be</i>      | „ <i>lie</i> .                                   |
| No. 30. 66.   | 16. <i>touch</i>  | „ <i>kiss</i> .                                  |
| No. 41. 89.   | 4. <i>portals</i> | „ <i>pavement</i> .                              |
| No. 46. 108.  | 9. <i>heaven</i>  | „ <i>hope</i> .                                  |
|               | 11.               | <i>I know not only for We see them not, but.</i> |

With the exception of those in No. 46, which will be considered later, all these variants are to be discarded as corruptions on the authority both of the original MSS. and of Miss Dolben's copy. But it is *very* surprising that Wm. Cory should have made an inaccurate copy of poems that he thought worth copying; nor is there any simple account of his mistakes, for some of them look as if he was relying on his memory, some as if he misread the original, as where he writes *penny* for the peculiarly correct word *puny*, some as if he were consciously amending. Their evidence (purposely excluding No. 46) shows Cory's copies to be wholly unreliable, and I have only given his variants in full that they may discredit themselves and cause no further trouble.

Mr. Heneage Wynne Finch has very early copies of poems 45 and 46. In 45 the words are in a different order, thus: *Living I drew thee from the vale, To climb Parnassus' height with me. Dying, I etc.* Such a variation would arise very naturally, and many persons would prefer it to the severity of the original. And in 46, (which I will now deal with, italicising the variants,) he reads the final stanza thus,

There may be hope above  
 There may be rest beneath  
*I know not—only Love*  
*Is palpable—and death.*

Lord Esher's copy has this

There may be *heaven* above,  
 There may be rest beneath;  
*I know not—only Death*  
*Is palpable—and Love.*

## Notes

In the recovered original MS. the stanza is

There may be hope above  
There may be rest beneath,  
*We know not—only* Death  
Is palpable—and Love.

In Miss Dolben's copy (which is the text in the book) it is

There may be hope above,  
There may be rest beneath—  
*We see them not—but* Death  
Is palpable— . . . and Love.

In editing this last I merely got rid of some of the author's dashes, as is explained on p. 128 : and this is a good example of them.

It might seem that the discovery of an original MS. must finally decide the reading of this stanza : but the matter is not so simple. My published text of the poems was all printed from the pages of a copy of the poems which was made by Miss Dolben as they came to her ; and, except that in one place she wrote *veil* for *vale*, there was, I believe, absolutely no single inaccuracy of any kind in the whole of her copy ; and this statement has now to be extended to the long poem No. 50. Hence it must be assumed, on merely external evidence, that her copy of No. 46 was a faithful copy of the poem at some stage. We have therefore two original versions to deal with.

We gladly dismiss Wm. Cory's *heaven* for *hope* with the rest of his corruptions. Also the *I* for *We* in the last line but one must go, having the two original authorities against it. The transposition of *death* and *love* is plainly a mistake.

The only doubt then is whether we should read *We know not only*, or *We see them not, but*.

The copy in Dolben's handwriting is headed *Ad quendam*, whereas his sister's copy has *A Song* : and this change of title together with the quality of the variants in her copy, which are in the nature of correction, make a strong case for judging Miss Dolben's version to be the later ; and this is confirmed



## Notes

by her not having corrected it, since she must have known the other version. I do not hold that later are necessarily better versions of poems, but I think that in Dolben's case they generally were, and that in this instance the change of *know* to *see* got rid of a meaning which discredited the mood of the poem. However that may be, I am glad to have reduced all the variants to this one.

49. This poem is dated May 1867, which locates it at Finedon. But for it his Greek lyrics would have indisputably outdone the Christian. This master-piece, which no doubt owes its existence to Rossetti's 'Blessed Damozel', somewhat restores the balance. The flush of its sincerity carries the fanciful mediaevalism without a trace of affectation; and in that respect it seems to me superior to its model. In stanza 4, last line, the word *Holy* has got into the text of the copies in the place of *Goddess*, which is in my copy, and (whether original or due to recension) altogether preferable. Mr. Humphrey Paul has found other copies of this poem; one, which he calls 'an obviously later MS.', contains *Godis* (*sic*) in l. 28, and *through* for *in* at line 30: and in line 39 *whither draw* is written for *where mount*, and in lines 53 and 54 *lift* and *perfect* are written for *bring* and *joyous*. I think that these leave the text in the book as the most acceptable.

50. I had not the original MS. of this for collation, and have avoided determining ambiguous constructions by punctuation. In stanza 10 *tired* is *tierd* not *tirèd*. [An original MS. of this poem has been found, corresponding exactly with Miss Dolben's copy.]

51. This and the two following poems were found in his desk after his death. In the last line of this poem the MS. has '*And subtilty*'. But the word is intended for a trisyllable, to be pronounced *subtle-ty*, so that I have corrected the spelling to avoid error.

P.S. In this second edition the Poems are reprinted verbatim from the first. I have not myself corrected the proofs.

## NOTES TO THE MEMOIR

p. viii. Dolben had other font-names, but as he invariably suppressed them I have followed his own use.

xxii. I was eleven years of age in the lower school in the division called Sense when I first read Ovid ; and some elegiacs of his opened my eyes to poetry.

xxxiii. Coles tells me that 'as a matter of fact there was not a Roman-catholic chapel at Slough'. I must leave this matter of local history open.

xxxiv. The letters. I have printed almost every scrap that I have, because they are the only actual relics, and afford a picture which would be weakened by selection.

p. li note. Mr. Bartle Hack, the Vicar of St. Thomas' Church, Oxford, informs me that 'the Prodigal's Introit' was published in the *Union Review*, vol. ii, 1864, p. 322, and 'the Prodigal's Benediction' p. 430, both signed P. P. P. O. Also the hexameter poem described on p. lxi appears in volume iii, p. 234, under the title 'Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini'. And 'Vocation' at p. 577 ; and No. 18 in vol. iv, p. 109 ; and No. 25 at p. 666. These are signed 'Dominic O. S. B. ii.' I have compared the unimportant variants of these editings, and do not think them worth recording.

lxx. Constantine E. Prichard was a friend of Walter Bagehot, and is mentioned in his recently published Memoir. Walter Bagehot was first cousin to V. S. S. Coles' mother. [1914.]

cxiii. Except it were Walford, I do not know from whom Newman can have 'heard of' Dolben in the sense implied : and since, in my opinion, his kindly words do not show accurate knowledge, this fact was of weight with me in balancing the evidence of Walford's influence over Dolben. If they two had been intimate together, then Newman would have been better informed ; whereas his words are like the practised utterance of one who, accustomed to have admirers hanging on his speech, is skilful in formulating what will satisfy without offence. Coles tells me that, wishing to

## Notes

know whether Dolben had acted under Newman's advice, and being anxious to learn any facts, he wrote a letter of enquiry to the Cardinal: but that Newman, either mistaking his meaning, or perhaps because he had no real information to give, replied most courteously by discussing the question concerning which he imagined a friend would be most likely to wish for information, namely whether, since Dolben had not been received into the Roman communion, his soul could be saved. This clerkly opinion is lost

Of the two portraits of Dolben I have not been able to establish the dates. The tradition is that they were both done at the same time before he left Eton. They are from the firm of Hills and Saunders.

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